



THE EUCHARIST

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# THE EUCHARIST

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Lutheran/Roman Catholic Joint Commission

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# Preface

The Lutheran/Roman Catholic Joint Commission established by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation has completed its work on a document concerning the Lord's Supper. Following its unanimous passage by commission members, the document is now presented for discussion. Agreement has been reached on significant points. In large measure it has been possible to make a common witness. Thus we are confident that those questions which remain open will be clarified mutually. We hope that the following document will further full community in faith and, thus, that community at the Lord's Table for which we yearn.

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Chairpersons

# Introduction

1. Since 1965 — after more than 400 years of separation — discussions have been taking place at a world level between officially appointed representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church. The competent church authorities set up an international study commission to consider the theme “The Gospel and the Church” and, in this connection, to re-examine in the light of more recent insights certain theological problems, particularly the traditional theological controversies. A report on the results reached by the commission was published in 1972.<sup>1</sup> This document gave expression to important convergences and a certain consensus. But as was expressly pointed out in the preface, the theme put before the commission was so broad that certain important questions could either not be considered at all or at least not extensively. These included problems connected with the Eucharist and the Ministry. The need for a thorough clarification of these questions is not only underscored by the commission itself, and also by the reactions to the Malta Report, but one is made painfully aware of the urgency of this matter by our continuing separation in the Supper of unity: the full unity of Christians, presupposing unity in faith, includes eucharistic communion. In continuing the official dialogue, therefore, the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Joint Commission has paid special attention to the Eucharist and now presents the results of its efforts.<sup>2</sup> This is to be followed by a study of the ministry of the church in which special consideration will be given to the

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Joint Lutheran/Roman Catholic Study Commission “The Gospel and the Church” with a preface by Dr. André Appel, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, and Cardinal Jan Willebrands, President of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (the so-called Malta Report), *Lutheran World*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, 1972, 259-273; and *Evangelium — Welt — Kirche: Schlussbericht und Referate der römisch-katholisch/evangelisch-lutherischen Studienkommission “Das Evangelium und die Kirche”, 1967-1971*; edited by H. Meyer, Frankfurt a. M. 1975, 33-58. (This latter volume also contains the German and English lectures delivered at the sessions of the commission.)

<sup>2</sup> Corresponding to the differing terminology in our traditions the terms Holy Communion, Eucharist and Lord’s Supper are used.



ministry of the bishop; many of the questions connected with the Eucharist can only find an answer in this subsequent document.

2. In working out the present text, the Lutheran/Catholic commission sought to give a joint witness whenever possible and, at the same time, to define the open questions as well as bringing them nearer a solution. What Lutheran and Catholic Christians can jointly confess will thus be able to find a place in the life of the church and the congregations.

3. The text of the document took shape through reflection on the witness of Holy Scripture and on ecclesial traditions. The concrete shape of the liturgy had a special place in our considerations, because the eucharistic reality embraces doctrine and life, confession and liturgical form, piety and practice. In gratitude for what others have already done, and with a view to achieving the widest possible ecumenical impact, we have freely drawn on statements in already existing ecumenical documents in so far as these conform to the Lutheran and Catholic understanding.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Texts of agreement issued by the Commission on Faith and Order: "The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought", *Faith and Order, Louvain 1971: Study Reports and Documents*, Faith and Order Paper No. 59, Geneva 1971, 71-77.

"Beyond Intercommunion", *ibid.*, 54-70; quoted: Louvain 1971.

"The Eucharist", *One Baptism, One Eucharist and a Mutually Recognized Ministry: Three Agreed Statements*, Faith and Order Paper No. 73, Geneva 1975, 18-28; quoted: Accra.

Texts of agreement issued by the Group of les Dombes, France, consisting of French-speaking Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed theologians: "Towards a Common Eucharistic Faith?", *Modern Eucharistic Agreement*, London 1973, 51-64; quoted: Dombes I.

"Pastoral Agreement: The Meaning of the Eucharist", *ibid.*, 65-78; quoted: Dombes II.

Documents of the bilateral conversations with the Anglican Church: "Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations 1970-1972. Authorized by the Lambeth Conference and the Lutheran World Federation", *Lutheran World*, Vol. XIX, 1972, 387-399.

"Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine, Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission, 7th September, 1971 in Windsor", *One in Christ*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 1972, 69-74; quoted: Windsor.

Reports of the official dialogue of Roman Catholics and Lutherans in the United States:

"The Eucharist as Sacrifice", *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue*, edited by P. C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy, Washington, D. C. and New York, N.Y., 1967, Vol. III, 187-200; quoted: USA III.

"Eucharist and Ministry", *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue*, Washington, D.C. and New York, N.Y., 1970, Vol. IV, 7-33; quoted: USA IV.

(Bible quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version.)

4. The statement is subdivided as follows:
  - The first part, on “joint witness”, expresses what Lutheran and Catholic Christians are able to confess jointly.
  - The second part turns to “joint tasks”. It identifies and discusses points of disagreement, and indicates the consequences and imperatives for the life, teaching and especially liturgy of the church which emerge from the document.
  - The exposition is followed by some examples of eucharistic liturgy which exemplify the liturgical traditions and practices of the two churches.
  - In the attached appendices, a Lutheran and a Catholic member of the commission consider the degree to which historical research and ecclesial developments can now overcome on certain essential points the controverted issues which have in the past caused division. The commission has agreed to receive these texts, which were prepared by the authors on their own responsibility.
5. This document is addressed to all Catholic and Lutheran Christians, to church authorities, theologians, pastors, local communities, and especially to all groups now engaged in the ecumenical dialogue. But it is addressed not only to Lutheran and Catholic Christians. Just as the commission gratefully accepted and utilized the suggestions of other Christian groups, it now hopes that the Lutheran/Catholic consideration of the Eucharist will be of help to others. To this end an attempt was made in this document to testify to a truth which is for all people, Christian and non-Christian alike.

## Part I

# Joint Witness

### I. The Legacy of Christ According to the Scripture

6. Before Jesus went to his death in order to bestow on human beings peace and communion with God and with one another, he prepared the last Supper for his disciples: "In the night in which he was betrayed and gave himself up to suffer, he took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples with the words 'Take and eat, all of you, this is my body which is given for you'. Likewise he took the cup after supper, gave thanks and gave it to his disciples saying, 'Take and drink from it, all of you: this is the cup of the new and eternal covenant, my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. Do this for the remembrance of me.'"<sup>4</sup> In this new passover meal the Lord gave himself as nourishment to his disciples and thus, in anticipation of his coming glory, made them partakers in his work, life and suffering (cf. Matthew 26: 26-29; Mark 14: 22-25; Luke 22: 16-20; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26).

Whenever Christians celebrate the Lord's Supper according to his will in remembrance of him, he grants anew this communion and with it "forgiveness of sins, life and salvation"<sup>5</sup>.

### II. Mystery of Faith

7. The Lord's Supper is a mystery of faith in the fullest sense of the word. It belongs to the all-encompassing and incomprehensible mystery of salvation and participates in its character as mystery. God himself must communicate himself if human beings are to recognize the mystery, and it enters the range of our vision only to the extent that the Lord wills and effects. The Eucharist is thus only accessible to us through the divine gift of faith.

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<sup>4</sup> Ordo Missae, 1970, Prayer II (following Hippolytus).

<sup>5</sup> M. Luther's Small Catechism.



8. Even the attitudes and actions required of those who participate in the celebration are a matter of faith, not of their own power. The eucharistic community of life and action can grow only out of the community of faith created by the Holy Spirit (see 23 below).

9. Since Christian faith is essentially something shared with all fellow believers, the Eucharist is primarily an affair of the community and through this of individuals. Like the "new covenant", the "blood of the covenant" given in the Eucharist (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25) is granted to the new people of God and thus to its members.

10. All "grace and truth" (John 1:14) are now in our midst, in our Lord present in the Eucharist, which is thus also a mystery of faith in the sense of including the essential dimensions of the truth of faith.

The eucharistic celebration reflects the phases of salvation history: we are reminded of God's good creation, for which we give praise and thanks; the reality of sin becomes apparent and demands recollection and confession;

the consolation and promise of God's word are addressed to us anew and are received in hearing, obedience and response;

bread and wine, things of the world, are drawn into the process of salvation and healing, as are also basic features of human life: eating and drinking and communal celebration and action;

the union of Christians with their Lord and with each other is both the proclamation and the beginning of God's kingdom in our midst and a promise of the coming fulfilment.

11. Finally, the mystery of the Eucharist unites us to the ultimate mystery from, through, and towards which all things exist: the mystery of the triune God.

Our heavenly Father is the first source and final goal of the eucharistic event.

The incarnate Son of God is the living centre of the eucharistic event: the One in, with and through whom it unfolds.

The Holy Spirit is the immeasurable power of love which gives the Eucharist life and lasting effect.

12. This most profound mystery of the Lord's Supper and of our life is celebrated at the end of many eucharistic prayers in the doxology. In view of the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, it says:

"Through him, with him, in him  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

all honour and glory is yours, almighty Father  
now and forever. Amen".

Joining in this song of praise, which together we make our own, we can unite in the following common testimony:

### III. Through, With and In Christ

#### Through Christ

13. Only *through Christ Jesus* does the Eucharist exist. He was the first to celebrate it in the circle of the disciples. From him comes the commission to celebrate it ever anew for his remembrance until he comes again. It is he who prepares the Supper and extends the invitation. Through him the full, conscious and active participation of all believers in the eucharistic event is made possible and actual.<sup>6</sup> Through him those who preside over the eucharistic celebration in his name are called and commissioned. Their service is a clear indication that "the congregation is not proprietor of the action it is performing; that it is not the master of the eucharist but receives it from Another, Christ living in his Church"<sup>7</sup> (see below 65-68).

#### With Christ

14. Through him we can celebrate the Eucharist *with him*. The wonder of his presence occurs, not from human merit nor through human ability, but in the power of his grace alone. The meaning and consequences of this can be discerned only if we are open to the different ways in which the Lord is present.

15. Jesus Christ fulfils his promise, "I am with you always, to the close of age" (Matthew 28:20) in manifold ways. "We confess a manifold presence of Christ, the Word of God and Lord of the world. The crucified and risen Lord is present in his body, the people of God, for he is present 'where two or three are gathered in his name' (Matthew 18:20). He is present in baptism, for it is Christ himself who baptizes. He is present in the reading of the scriptures and the proclamation of the gospel."<sup>8</sup> The Lord is present in the poor and distressed since he said: "As you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

16. The eucharistic presence is continuous with all these modes of presence and is, at the same time, of a special character. "Christ is present and active, in various ways, in the entire eucharistic celebration. It is the same

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, No. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Dombes I, 34.

<sup>8</sup> USA III, II. 1a, 192.

Lord who through the proclaimed word invites his people to his table, who through his minister presides at that table, and who gives himself sacramentally in the Body and Blood of his paschal sacrifice.”<sup>9</sup>

In the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is present wholly and entirely, in his body and blood, under the signs of bread and wine.

“Through the centuries Christians have attempted various formulations to describe this presence. Our confessional documents have in common affirmed that Jesus Christ is ‘really’, ‘truly’ and ‘substantially’ present in this sacrament. This manner of presence ‘we can scarcely express in words’, but we affirm his presence because we believe in the power of God and the promise of Jesus Christ, ‘This is my body ... This is my blood ...’. Our traditions have spoken of this presence as ‘sacramental’, ‘supernatural’ and ‘spiritual’. These terms have different connotations in the two traditions, but they have in common a rejection of a spatial or natural manner of presence, and a rejection of an understanding of the sacrament as only commemorative or figurative.”<sup>10</sup>

17. “Christ instituted the eucharist, sacrament of his body and blood with its focus upon the cross and resurrection, as the *anamnesis* of the whole of God’s reconciling action in him. Christ himself with all that He has accomplished for us and for all creation (in his incarnation, servanthood, ministry, teaching, suffering, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension and Pentecost) is present in this *anamnesis* as is also the foretaste of his *Parousia* and the fulfilment of the Kingdom”<sup>11</sup> (see below 36).

18. The Lord present among us wants to draw us into the movement of his life. He, who in his love gave himself up to death, lives in us (Gal. 2:20). With him and through his grace we have “passed from death to life” (John 5:24). Participating in the eucharistic sacrament, we are on pilgrimage with him from this world to the world to come (*pascha, transitus*). Endowed and quickened by his Spirit we may hand on his love and so glorify the Father. The more powerless we are to offer to God a worthy sacrifice so much more shall we be taken up by the power of Christ into his offering. “When, in the Lord’s Supper, we come to God in self-surrender, we do so only ‘through Christ’, that is in union with his own surrender of himself ... To surrender oneself means ultimately ‘to open oneself in order to receive him’.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Windsor, No. 7.

<sup>10</sup> USA III, II. 1c, 192.

<sup>11</sup> Accra, Eucharist, No. 8.

<sup>12</sup> W. Jentsch, H. Jetter, M. Kiessig, H. Reller (authors), *Evangelischer Erwachsenen-katechismus*, Gütersloh 1975, 1111.



"Thus, united to our Lord, who offers himself to his Father, and in communion with the universal Church in heaven and on earth, we are renewed in the covenant sealed with the blood of Christ and we offer ourselves as a living and holy sacrifice which must be expressed in the whole of our daily life."<sup>13</sup>

In this way the perpetual meaning of the Christian faith is ever to be realized anew: a basic link with the Lord as he is in the whole range of actual destiny. Anyone united with him is summoned to die and rise with him (see below 34-36).

### In Christ

19. This being-with-Christ has its basis and climax in *being-in-Christ*. Under the signs of bread and wine the Lord offers as nourishment his body and blood, that is himself, which he has given for all. He thus shows himself to be the "living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6: 51). When a believer receives this food in faith, he will be taken into a communion with Christ which is akin to the communion of the Son with the Father: "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me" (John 6: 57). Christ wills to be in us, and we are enabled to be in Christ: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (John 6: 56). This communion is rooted in eternity and reaches out again beyond time into eternity. "He who eats this bread will live for ever" (John 6: 58).

20. In giving himself Christ unites all who partake at his table: the many become "one body" (1 Corinthians 10: 17). In the power of the Holy Spirit, they are built up as the one people of God. "It is the spirit that gives life" (John 6: 63). The eucharistic meal is thus the source of the daily new life of the people of God who through it are gathered together and kept in one faith.

## IV. In the Unity of the Holy Spirit

### The Holy Spirit and the Eucharist

21. During his life on earth, Jesus Christ did all things in the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 4: 1, 14, 17-21). It was in the power of the Spirit that he offered himself as sacrifice (Hebr. 9: 14) and conquered sin and death and rose from the tomb, and lives in the midst of his Pentecost community. Through and in the Spirit Christians are to remain bound to Christ and continue his work.

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<sup>13</sup> Dombes I, No. 11; cf. Accra, Eucharist, No. 11.

It is also through the Holy Spirit that Christ is at work in the Eucharist. All that the Lord gives us and all that enables us to make it our own is given to us through the Holy Spirit. In the liturgy this becomes particularly clear in the invocation of the Holy Spirit (*epiklesis*).<sup>14</sup>

22. In remembrance of the intercession of Christ, its high priest, the church asks with confidence for his Spirit, in order to be renewed and sanctified through the eucharistic gifts and so strengthened to accomplish its mission in the world. In the power of the Holy Spirit the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ through the creative word. The spirit of love causes the sacrament of love to become real in that the divine love seeks us in our earthly reality in order to bring us home again.

23. Only in the Holy Spirit does the congregation come to the faith without which it cannot celebrate the Eucharist. Thus the *epiklesis* is also the prayer for a living faith which prepares us to celebrate the remembrance of the suffering and resurrection of Christ. The Eucharist is not an automatic means for the salvation of the world; it presupposes the presence of the Holy Spirit within the believers (see above 7-9).

24. In the *fruits* of the Holy Spirit — the love, joy and peace which believers receive in the Eucharist in a special way — the ultimate fulfilment of all things is anticipated. The Eucharist is the meal celebrated in expectation of his coming in glory for the strengthening of the faithful. The invocation of the Holy Spirit is (accordingly) a plea for the future world to break into our present one (see below 42-45).

### Eucharist and Church

25. Baptized by the one Spirit into the one body (cf. 1 Corinthians 12: 13) believers — nourished by the body of Christ — become ever more one body through the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Corinthians 10: 17). The Eucharist and the church are thus, in manifold ways, linked together in a living bond.

26. As Christ gives himself to his people in the Eucharist his life becomes their life, his Spirit their spirit. The enduring form of life of the ecclesial communion with Christ arises from the event of the sacramental communion with Christ. "Nought else follows the partaking in the body and blood of Christ than that we become what we receive."<sup>15</sup> "... truly, we too are drawn and transformed into that spiritual body which is the communion of Christ and all the Saints, we are established through this sacrament in the virtues and graces of Christ and His Saints."<sup>16</sup> The Eucharist

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Accra, Eucharist, Nos. 17 and 18.

<sup>15</sup> Leo the Great, Sermo 63, 7.

<sup>16</sup> M. Luther, Sermon zum heiligen Leichnam Christi, WA 2, 749.

is thus at once the source and climax of the church's life. Without the eucharistic community there is no full ecclesial community, and without the ecclesial community there is no real eucharistic community.

27. This is true, first for the actual congregation wherever it gathers to celebrate the Lord's Supper, but equally it concerns the whole of Christianity. "The sharing of the common loaf and the common cup in a given place demonstrates the oneness of the sharers with the whole Christ and with their fellow sharers in all times and places. By sharing the common loaf they show their unity with the Church catholic."<sup>17</sup>

Even the limits of earthly reality are transcended in that the Holy Spirit also unites us to those who have gone before in faith and been called to eternal communion in God.

28. In view of this unity bestowed by Christ, the fact that Christians again and again sin against this unity is all the more serious. This occurs when they fail in faith and hope, but also when they tolerate or even cause deep divisions between human beings both in personal and social spheres.

Whoever has entered into communion with God must with him attack the walls of enmity which human beings erect against each other: walls of enmity between families, nations, races, classes, sexes, generations, confessions and religions.<sup>18</sup>

## V. Glorification of the Father

29. The union with Christ into which we are drawn in the Eucharist through the power of the Holy Spirit ultimately leads to the eternal Father. This occurs at different levels and in varying, yet internally related ways.

### Proclamation

30. The Eucharist as a whole — that is, not simply through reading and preaching — proclaims the greatness and mercy of God. Each of the elements in the service receives, appropriate to its nature, a particular significance.

The confession of sins by the assembled congregation always implies a public assent to God's act of reconciliation.

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<sup>17</sup> Accra, Eucharist, No. 19.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Dombes I, No. 22, and Accra, Eucharist, No. 20.



Through the reading and exposition of the Scriptures God's word penetrates and becomes effective in ever-new situations. The witness of the Scriptures and the preaching of the mighty acts of God not only call forth the confession of faith but are themselves a function of this confession.

The praying of the early Christian creeds proclaims the bond both with the early church and with all those who also adhere to them.

Bread and wine, "fruit of the earth and of human labour"<sup>19</sup> are first and foremost gifts of the Father and epitomize his good creation. Their inclusion in the eucharistic action is a striking witness to the sustaining creative power which upholds all things at each moment and leads toward their fulfilment.

Above all, each eucharistic meal testifies to that love for the whole world made manifest on the cross by God who gave his Son for the world (cf. John 3:16): "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

## Thanksgiving

31. Their very nature links proclamation and thanksgiving closely together. Accordingly the Eucharist "is the great thanksgiving to the Father for everything which He accomplished in creation, redemption and sanctification, for everything which He accomplishes now in the Church and in the world in spite of the sins of men, for everything that He will accomplish in bringing his Kingdom to fulfilment. Thus the eucharist is the benediction (*berakah*) by which the Church expresses its thankfulness to God for all his benefits."<sup>20</sup>

Thanksgiving to God the Father and Creator of all good gifts is expressed materially as well as verbally in the congregation's celebration. The self-giving of Christ and the promise of the coming kingdom relativises all the riches of this world and makes us aware of God as the giver and ourselves as the stewards of these gifts. In the offering of bread and wine we praise God who through our work provides us with the earthly gifts necessary for our life. We offer ourselves (cf. Romans 12:1) and share one with the other what has been given us.

## Intercession

32. Strengthened through faith in God's mercies the congregation intercedes in the same eucharistic celebration for all men, for the needs of the world, for the concerns of the faithful and of those who have special

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<sup>19</sup> Ordo Missae, Offertory Prayer.

<sup>20</sup> Accra, Eucharist, No. 6; cf. Dombes I, No. 7.

responsibilities in church and society. The church is thus united with the intercession its Lord is making in the presence of the Father (cf. Hebrews 7:25) and pleads through him for that promised salvation of the world of which the congregation has received a foretaste through its faith and hope through the Holy Spirit. We rejoice that this trust in God's saving action in the world is being more clearly expressed in the celebrations of our congregations, but this also involves obligations of active solidarity with all who suffer.<sup>21</sup>

## Praise

33. "The eucharist is the great sacrifice of praise by which the Church speaks on behalf of the whole creation."<sup>22</sup> Through the fall of man the sacrifice of praise due to God from mankind was silenced. In Christ it is brought to life again. Renewed in Christ the creation sings its praise in the eucharistic congregation, above all in the Preface and the Sanctus. It is enabled to worship the Father in spirit and truth (cf. John 4:23f).

## Self-giving

34. In his body given for his own (Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:24) and in his blood poured out for them (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20), the Lord in his still-giving is present. He is amongst us as the one given by the Father in the Holy Spirit and as the one giving himself for the Father and mankind in the Holy Spirit. It is thus that he imparts himself and wills to continue to be effective. The more the celebrating community is drawn into this act of self-offering, the more it lives to the greater glory of God. The church which proclaims the Lord's death is summoned to unite itself with this death. It should not only know and talk about sacrifice, it should allow itself to be seized by it. In dying with its Lord, the church will be prepared for rising with him.

35. The union with himself which Christ offers also affects the desires and acts of his people. "That is the fruit of the Lord's Supper, that you give yourself with all your life just as Christ in these words gave himself for you together with all that he is"<sup>23</sup> (see above 18).

36. When the church actually follows the command of the Lord: "Do this in remembrance of me!" (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24f), it comes in contact with the sacrifice of Christ anew: it receives new life from him and the power to die with him.

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Dombes I, No. 27.

<sup>22</sup> Accra, Eucharist, No. 7; Louvain 1971, No. 73.

<sup>23</sup> M. Luther, Maundy Thursday 1524, WA 15, 498.



"The notion of *memorial* as understood in the passover celebration at the time of Christ — i.e., the making effective in the present of an event in the past — has opened the way to a clearer understanding of the relationship between Christ's sacrifice and the eucharist"<sup>24</sup> (see above 17).

In the *memorial celebration of the people of God* more happens than that past events are brought to mind by this power of recall and imagination. The decisive point is not that what is past is called to mind, but that the Lord calls his people into his presence and confronts them with his salvation. In this creative act of God, the salvation event from the past becomes the offer of salvation for the present and the promise of salvation for the future.

All those who celebrate the Eucharist in remembrance of him are incorporated in Christ's life, passion, death and resurrection. They receive the fruit of Christ's offering his life and thereby of the entire reconciling saving act of God. In the passover meal of the new covenant, they are freed and united with God and one another. So they give thanks "for all his mercies, entreat the benefits of his passion on behalf of the whole church, participate in these benefits and enter into the movement of his self-offering"<sup>25</sup>.

In receiving in faith, they are taken as his body into the reconciling sacrifice which equips them for self-giving (Romans 12: 1) and enables them "through Jesus Christ" to offer "spiritual sacrifices" in service to the world (1 Peter 2: 5). Thus is rehearsed in the Lord's Supper what is practised in the whole Christian life. "With contrite hearts we offer ourselves as a living and holy sacrifice, a sacrifice which must be expressed in the whole of our daily lives."<sup>26</sup>

37. Our two traditions agree in understanding the Eucharist as a *sacrifice of praise*. This is neither simple verbal praise of God, nor is it a supplement or a complement which people from their own power add to the offering of praise and thanksgiving which Christ has made to the Father. The eucharistic sacrifice of praise has only become possible through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross: therefore this remains the main content of the church's sacrifice of praise. Only "by him, with him, and in him who is our great High Priest and Intercessor we offer to the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, our praise, thanksgiving and intercession"<sup>27</sup> (see below 56-61).

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<sup>24</sup> Windsor, No. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> USA III, I. 1b, 188f. as quoted from Montreal 1963.

<sup>27</sup> USA III, I. 1b, 188 as quoted from Montreal; cf. also *Evangelischer Erwachsenen-katechismus*, 1115.

## VI. For the Life of the World

38. The movement of Jesus' life towards the Father into which he leads his people, is meant for all. The bread that Christ himself is and gives is intended "for the life of the world" (John 6: 51).

### The Eucharist's Relation to the World

39. "For the world which God in Christ reconciled with Himself is present at each eucharist: in the bread and the wine, in the persons of the faithful and in the prayers they offer for all humankind. Thus the eucharist opens up to the world the way to its transfiguration."<sup>28</sup> It reveals to the world what it is and what it is to become.<sup>29</sup> Rooted in the past, translated into reality in the present, and directed to the future, the Eucharist concentrates in itself all dimensions of historical growth. That indicates its deep bond with our changing world, and contributes to a deeper understanding and more responsible action in it.

In the eucharistic unity, the new unity of mankind begins to emerge. Christ as head of the church is head of the whole of saved humanity. He gives the church his life so that in this way all may receive it. "When we gather around the same table in this communal meal at the invitation of the same Lord and when we 'partake of the one loaf', we are one in commitment not only to Christ and to one another, but also to the mission of the Church in the world."<sup>30</sup>

### The Responsibility of the Christians for the World

40. The Eucharist as a whole — and not just in one part or another — is directed towards the salvation of the world. Therefore, Christians who celebrate the Eucharist are called to service to the world. Communion with Christ enables and obliges us to help all men.

41. "Reconciled in the eucharist, the members of the body of Christ become the servants of reconciliation among men and witnesses of the joy of the resurrection. Their presence in the world implies fellowship in suffering and hope with all men, among whom they are called upon to bear witness to the love of Christ in service and in combat. The celebration of the eucharist, the breaking of a bread that is necessary to life, is an incitement not to accept conditions in which men are deprived of bread, justice, and peace."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Dombes I, No. 8.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Accra, Eucharist, No. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Windsor, No. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Dombes I, No. 27.

Such actions are particularly necessary when social, national or racial divisions develop within the church (cf. 1 Corinthians 11: 18-30). Evils of this kind can have as disastrous effects as schisms in faith. They contradict the nature of the church and render its witness ineffective and its sacramental celebrations unworthy. The words of the Lord: "First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5: 24) apply to the Eucharist also.

## VII. With a View to the Future Glory

42. In the Eucharist we proclaim "the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11: 26). In it the future glory is promised, as well as, in an initial way, revealed and mediated.

### Promise

43. The form and effect of the Eucharist are a promise of the eternal glory to which we are destined, and a sign pointing to the new heaven and new earth towards which we are moving: "that is why the eucharist directs our thoughts to the Lord's coming and brings it near to us. It is a joyful anticipation of the heavenly banquet, when redemption shall be fully accomplished and all creation shall be delivered from bondage".<sup>32</sup> "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19: 9).

### Initial Revelation

44. The Lord's Supper enables us to understand the future glory as the boundless and eternal wedding feast to which we are invited by the Lord. As a fraternal meal in which Christ frees and unites, it turns our gaze to the promised eternal kingdom of unlimited freedom and righteousness.

Those who celebrate together are called to join personal commitment and communal service, and thereby to point to that fulfilment of personal and social life which belongs to the glory of God, the glory in which by his grace we may share.

### Mediation

45. The promised future begins in a mysterious way here and now in the Lord's Supper. He who receives the bread of life has eternal life (John 6: 54). He is without waiting taken straight away into the great future

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., No. 29.

opened to us by the Lord. Everlasting life does not begin in the future, but is already present in anyone who is united with the Lord. The future world breaks into our present one even now.

"Thus, by giving the eucharist to his Church, which, in its weakness, will live to the last in the midst of suffering and strife, our Lord enables it to take new heart and to persevere;"<sup>33</sup> he gives it the power to work untiringly for the renewal of the life and structures of the world. The life of the world to come, promised, disclosed and mediated to believers, shall and must become effective already in this world.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., No. 30.



## Part II

# Common Tasks

46. The common witness to the Lord's Supper confronts us with tasks which we ought to face together as far as possible.

- (I) We must give an account of how far we have been able to clarify and overcome the problems which once broke up the communion of faith and Eucharist, and to what degree they still prevent a complete fellowship.
- (II) The concrete liturgical form of the eucharistic celebration in our congregations must be in accordance with what we confess in faith.
- (III) The witness of faith must not be confined either to the theoretical or individual realm; as many members as possible of the people of God should accept and vitally transmit it (reception).

### I. Overcoming Controverted Positions

47. Common statements and convictions fill us with hope: much of what earlier divided us has on both sides been removed and the remaining differences exist within a common framework. Controverted positions which hinder complete fellowship of faith and Eucharist must be recognized, described and faced with the purpose of recognizing and overcoming what is divisive.

#### Eucharistic Presence

48. Roman Catholic and Lutheran Christians together confess the real and true presence of the Lord in the Eucharist. There are differences, however, in theological statements on the mode and therefore duration of the real presence.

49. In order to confess the *reality* of the eucharistic presence without reserve the Roman Catholic Church teaches that "Christ whole and

entire"<sup>34</sup> becomes present through the transformation of the whole substance of the bread and the wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ while the empirically accessible appearances of bread and wine (*accidentia*) continue to exist unchanged. This "wonderful and singular change is most aptly called transubstantiation by the Catholic Church"<sup>35</sup>. This terminology has widely been considered by Lutherans as an attempt rationalistically to explain the mystery of Christ's presence in the sacrament: further, many suppose also that in this approach the present Lord is not seen as a person and that naturalistic misunderstandings are suggested.

50. The Lutherans have given expression to the reality of the eucharistic presence by speaking of a presence of Christ's body and blood in, with and under bread and wine — but not of transubstantiation. Here one sees the real analogy to the Lord's incarnation: as God and man are united in Jesus Christ, so Christ's body and blood, on the one hand, and the bread and wine, on the other, become a sacramental unity. Catholics, on this point, find that this does not do sufficient justice to this very unity and to the force of Christ's word "This is my body".

51. The ecumenical discussion has shown that these two positions must no longer be regarded as opposed in a way that leads to separation. The Lutheran tradition affirms the Catholic tradition that the consecrated elements do not simply remain bread and wine but rather by the power of the creative word are given as the body and blood of Christ. In this sense Lutherans also could occasionally speak, as does the Greek tradition, of a "change".<sup>36</sup> The concept of transubstantiation for its part is intended as a confession and preservation of the mystery character of the eucharistic presence; it is not intended as an explanation of *how* this change occurs.<sup>37</sup> (See appendix "The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist".)

52. Differences related to the *duration* of the eucharistic presence appear also in liturgical practice.

Catholic and Lutheran Christians together confess that the eucharistic presence of the Lord Jesus Christ is directed toward believing reception, that it nevertheless is not confined only to the moment of reception, and that it does not depend on the faith of the receiver however closely related to this it might be.

<sup>34</sup> Council of Trent, DS 1641. The English translations of the quotations from Denzinger are taken from *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, St. Louis, B. Herder Book Co., 1941 (trans. by Rev. H. J. Schroeder, O.P.).

<sup>35</sup> Council of Trent, DS 1652.

<sup>36</sup> See Apologia Confessionis X, 2; cf. also USA III, II, 2c, 195.

<sup>37</sup> Windsor, No. 6, note 2.

53. According to Catholic doctrine the Lord grants his eucharistic presence even beyond the sacramental celebration for as long as the species of bread and wine remain. The faithful are accordingly invited to "give to this holy sacrament in veneration the worship of *latria*, which is due to the true God"<sup>38</sup>.

54. Lutherans have not infrequently taken exception to certain of the forms of eucharistic piety connected with this conviction. They are regarded as inadmissibly separated from the eucharistic meal. On the other hand, Catholic sensibilities are offended by the casual way in which the elements remaining after communion are treated sometimes on the Lutheran side, and this indicates a discrepancy which is not yet overcome (cf. appendix "The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist", 2).

55. In order to remedy this situation, it would be good "for Catholics to remember, particularly in catechism and preaching, that the original intention in preserving the eucharistic gifts was to distribute them to the sick and those not present", and for Lutherans "the best means should be adopted of showing respect due to the elements that have served for the celebration of the eucharist, which is to consume them subsequently, without precluding their use for communion of the sick"<sup>39</sup>.

Regarding eucharistic adoration, Catholics should be watchful that their practice does not contradict the common conviction of the meal character of the Eucharist. They should also be conscious of the fact that in the Orthodox churches, for example, other forms of eucharistic piety exist without their eucharistic faith being questioned (by Rome). Lutherans for their part should consider "that adoration of the reserved sacrament" not only "has been very much a part of Catholic life and a meaningful form of devotion to Catholics for many centuries"<sup>40</sup>, but that also for them "as long as Christ remains sacramentally present, worship, reverence and adoration are appropriate"<sup>41</sup>.

### Eucharistic Sacrifice

56. Catholic and Lutheran Christians together recognize that in the Lord's Supper Jesus Christ "is present as the Crucified who died for our sins and who rose again for our justification, as the once-for-all sacrifice

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<sup>38</sup> Council of Trent, DS 1643.

<sup>39</sup> Dombes I, No. 20; cf. Accra, Eucharist, No. 35 and the statement of the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, "Eucharistic Hospitality", No. 27g.

<sup>40</sup> USA III, II. 2af, particularly note 29, 194.

<sup>41</sup> USA III, II. 2ac, 194; and M. Luther, The Adoration of the Sacrament of the Holy Body of Christ, 1523, LW 36, 269-305 (= WA 11, 431-456).



for the sins of the world"<sup>42</sup>. This sacrifice can be neither continued, nor repeated, nor replaced, nor complemented; but rather it can and should become effective ever anew in the midst of the congregation. There are different interpretations among us regarding the nature and extent of this effectiveness.

57. According to *Catholic teaching*, in each Eucharist "a true and proper sacrifice is offered" through Christ.<sup>43</sup> "This sacrifice is truly propitiatory and has this effect that we 'obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need' (Hebrews 4: 16) . . . For the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of the priests who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner of offering alone being different . . . Wherefore, according to the tradition of the Apostles, it is rightly offered not only for the sins, punishments, satisfactions and other necessities of the faithful who are living, but also for those departed in Christ but not yet fully purified."<sup>44</sup>

58. As members of his body the believers are included in the offering of Christ. This happens in different ways: none of them is added externally to the offering of Christ, but each derives from him and points to him:

The liturgical preparation of the Lord's Supper with the offering of bread and wine is part of the eucharistic sacrifice. Above all, inner participation is necessary: acknowledgement and confession of one's own powerlessness and total dependence on God's help, obedience to his commission, faith in his word and his promise.

It is in the eucharistic presence of the offered and offering Lord that those who are redeemed by him can, in the best sense, make an offering. They bring to the heavenly Father a gift which allows no sort of self-complacency and self-righteousness to arise. It is wholly and completely a free, unmerited gift of the love of God which is in no way merited by man; at the same time it is intimately joined with human beings, more than can be the case with anything else which could otherwise be offered: Christ has become completely ours, he is our head. Of ourselves we have nothing and are unable to do anything. Therefore we do not point to ourselves but to him. Of ourselves we cannot offer to God praise, glory and honour, but we offer Christ: he is praise, glory and honour. It is this act of testifying to one's own powerlessness, of complete reliance on Christ and of offering and presenting him to the Father which is intended when the Catholic church dares to say that not only Christ offers himself for humanity, but that the church also "offers" him. "The members of the body of Christ are united through Christ with God and with one another in such a way that

<sup>42</sup> USA III, I. 1a, 188.

<sup>43</sup> Council of Trent, DS 1751.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., DS 1743.



they become participants in his worship, his self-offering, his sacrifice to the Father. Through this union between Christ and Christians, the eucharistic assembly 'offers Christ' by consenting in the power of the Holy Spirit to be offered by him to the Father. Apart from Christ, we have no gifts, no worship, no sacrifice of our own to offer to God. All we can plead is Christ, the sacrificial lamb and victim whom the Father himself has given us."<sup>45</sup>

59. The Lutherans have feared that the understanding of the Eucharist as propitiatory sacrifice is contrary to the uniqueness and complete sufficiency of the sacrifice of the cross and calls in question Christ's exclusive mediation of salvation (cf. the appendix "The Mass as Sacrifice for Atonement"). According to the interpretation of the Lutheran Reformation, the celebration of the Eucharist is wholly directed to imparting to the gathered community the gift of the sacrifice of the cross made present as the effective means of salvation, and this in such a way that the community may receive it in faith. The diminution in practice of congregational communion was regarded as scandalous, and the primary blame for this was placed on the idea of the Mass as a propitiatory sacrifice. It was thought that this idea allowed for a view which made unnecessary the reception in faith of eucharistic grace and attributed an autonomous sacrificial power to the priest (cf. the Reformation polemic against the Mass as *opus operatum*). Therefore the Lutheran tradition avoids even today any mention of "sacrifice of the Mass".

60. On the other hand the Lutheran Reformation affirmed the understanding of the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice of thanksgiving in return for the sacrifice of the cross present in the sacrament. This sacrifice is an expression of faith and happens in such a way "that we offer with Christ, that is, that we cast ourselves upon Christ with unwavering faith in his testament and we do not appear otherwise before God with our prayer, praise and sacrifice than through Him and His means (of salvation) and that we do not doubt that He is our own Pastor and Priest before God's face in heaven"<sup>46</sup>. The "eucharistic sacrifice"<sup>47</sup> thus understood is performed by those reconciled in faith, and is expressed in thanks and praise, in invoking and confessing God, in suffering and in all the good works of believers. These are the offerings which are particularly emphasized in the Reformation teaching in connection with 1 Peter 2:5 and Romans 12:1.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> USA III, I, 2b, 189f.

<sup>46</sup> M. Luther, A Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass, 1520, LW 35, 99 (= WA 6, 369, 5-9); see further USA III, I, 2b, note 6, 189.

<sup>47</sup> *Sacrificia eucharistica*, Apologia Confessionis XXIV, 25.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. especially Apologia Confessionis XXIV, 19-26.

61. In ecumenical discussion we have learned better to understand each other's interpretations. Research into the historical background of the Reformation polemic as well as the consideration of new developments in both churches have proved especially helpful. Increasingly we recognize the interpretations of the other as a challenge to our own position and as a help in improving, deepening and enlivening it.

We can thankfully record a growing convergence on many questions which have until now been difficulties in our discussions:

- a) according to Catholic doctrine the sacrifice of the Mass is the making present of the sacrifice of the cross. It is not a repetition of this sacrifice and adds nothing to its saving significance. When thus understood, the sacrifice of the Mass is an affirmation and not a questioning of the uniqueness and full value of Christ's sacrifice on the cross;
- b) according to Catholic doctrine the *ex opere operato* should witness in the context of the sacramentology to the priority of God's action. To stress this priority is likewise the concern of the Lutherans.
- c) Such an understanding of *opus operatum* does not exclude the believing participation of the whole worshipping community: God's action calls for this and makes it possible;
- d) the conviction that the fruits of the Eucharist extend beyond the circle of those present at a celebration does not diminish the importance of active believing participation. Christ's gift of his flesh and blood to those who receive the Eucharist in faith cannot be transferred to others. Yet we may hope, however, that he allows others to share in his help. Whether and how this happens is entirely dependent on the sovereign love of the Lord. Intercessions and intentions at the Mass for specific persons — living as well as dead — do not limit his freedom.

These insights give us the confidence to be able to clarify the questions which are still outstanding.

## Eucharistic Communion

62. Lutheran and Catholic Christians confess together that in the Eucharist the body and blood of the Lord are really received, either for salvation or for condemnation (cf. 1 Corinthians 11 : 27-29). They confess that the believing reception of the eucharistic bread and wine gives us personal union with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. They also agree that the efficacy of believers' reception of the Lord cannot be measured by human standards but belongs in the sphere of the free and humanly uncontrollable action of God.

63. Lutherans and Catholics confess together the conviction that by its very essence the Eucharist is a communal meal. For Lutherans the partici-

pation of the congregation is an indispensable part of the celebration of the Eucharist according to its institution by the Lord. They regard Masses in which the people do not participate as a custom that corresponds neither to the practice of the ancient church nor to the institution of the Lord. (Such Masses have been given the misleading and theologically unsatisfactory label of "private Masses".) Since the Second Vatican Council a significant change has taken place in the liturgical practice of the Roman Catholic Church which underlines the superiority of the "communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful . . . even though every Mass has of itself a public and social nature"<sup>49</sup>. This priority of communal celebration signifies an important *rapprochement* in our eucharistic practice (cf. the appendix "The Eucharist as a Communal Meal").

64. Catholics and Lutherans are at one in the conviction that bread and wine belong to the complete form of the Eucharist. In the Catholic celebration of the Eucharist the faithful are for the most part given only the species of the bread. This occurs chiefly for practical reasons and is based on the conviction that Christ is fully present under both species so that reception in one kind constitutes no diminution in effect. In contrast the Reformers see the completeness and wholeness of the sacramental sign in accordance to Christ's words of institution as preserved only where all drink from the cup. Nevertheless the Lutheran church does not deny the doctrine that Christ is completely present in both species, and Lutheran practice recognizes urgent cases of pastoral necessity in which the Eucharist can also be received in one species (cf. the appendix "The Eucharist as a Communal Meal").

The possibilities of receiving the Eucharist in both kinds have been considerably extended by the Second Vatican Council in regard to both the occasions and the communicants. If differences in doctrine and practice continue also to persist in this area, they no longer have a church-dividing character.

### Eucharistic Ministry

65. Catholic and Lutheran Christians are of the conviction that the celebration of the Eucharist involves the leadership of a minister appointed by the church.

66. According to Catholic doctrine every licit eucharistic celebration is "regulated by the bishop, to whom is committed the office of offering the worship of Christian religion to the divine Majesty and of administering it

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<sup>49</sup> Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, No. 27; cf. also Council of Trent, DS 1747.



in accordance with the Lord's commandments and with the Church's laws"<sup>50</sup>. "Only those Eucharists are lawful which are performed by the bishop or a person charged by him."<sup>51</sup> The ordination of a bishop or priest is accordingly the essential prerequisite to their presiding at the Lord's Supper: even in exceptional cases there can be no eucharistic celebration without an ordained priest. In so far as the sacrament of ordination is lacking, the Roman Catholic Church sees even separated Christians as not having "preserved the genuine and total reality (*substantia*) of the Eucharistic mystery"<sup>52</sup>.

67. According to Lutheran doctrine as well, the eucharistic service is led by ordained ministers.<sup>53</sup> It is "the task of the ministerial office to proclaim the gospel and administer the sacraments in accordance with the gospel, so that in this way faith is awakened and strengthened"<sup>54</sup>. For Lutherans the ecclesial office is a divine institution, although ordination is not usually characterized as a sacrament.<sup>55</sup>

68. The dialogue between our two traditions has already been able to ascertain significant convergences on the question of the ministry. These convergences have to do with the understanding of the basis and function of the ministry as well as the manner of transmission through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit;<sup>56</sup> and they have led to the suggestion that the possibility of mutual recognition of ecclesial ministries be submitted for serious examination.<sup>57</sup> In carrying out this recommendation, it must be asked, among other things, how the Lutheran churches regard a Eucharist celebrated without an ordained minister. It must also be asked, in view of the Lutheran interpretation and practice of ordination, how the Roman Catholic Church evaluates the Eucharist celebrated in the Lutheran church. What needs to be clarified, then, is the importance and ecclesiological ordering of the ministry, and what consequences it has for the structure of the church.

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<sup>50</sup> Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, No. 26.

<sup>51</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, Ad Smyrn, 8, 1: P.G. 5, 713.

<sup>52</sup> Vatican II, Decree on Ecumenism, No. 22.

<sup>53</sup> Confessio Augustana XIV.

<sup>54</sup> Malta, No. 61.

<sup>55</sup> USA IV, 16; Malta, No. 59.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Malta, No. 59.

<sup>57</sup> Malta, Nos. 63-64.

## Eucharistic Fellowship

69. Catholic and Lutheran Christians confess together that Jesus Christ joins together all those who are joined to him.

70. According to Catholic conviction this holds also for the eucharistic communion with Christ. In this are included those who have passed away in the peace of the Lord. Intercessions for the dead are therefore a part of the Catholic eucharistic celebration. The Roman Catholic Church also remembers those departed from this life who have gone into heavenly joy. It thanks God for the grace granted them and commends itself to their intercession and protection.

71. The Lutheran celebration of the Eucharist also gives expression in thanksgiving and in intercession to the communion of the heavenly and earthly congregation. The Reformation rejected the invocation of the saints, but did not deny the intercession of the saints in heaven.<sup>58</sup> A doctrinal reticence regarding the fate of the dead also restrains Lutherans from interceding for them.

72. The eucharistic fellowship calls for and fosters actual community of faith within the church according to Catholic doctrine. Its nature comprises:

- “the ministerial power which Christ gave to his apostles and to their successors, the bishops, along with the priests, to make effective sacramentally his own priestly act — that act by which once and forever he offered himself to the Father in the Holy Spirit, and gave himself to his faithful that they might be one in him;
- the unity of the ministry, which is to be exercised in the name of Christ, Head of the Church, and hence in the hierarchial communion of ministers;
- the faith of the Church, which is expressed in the eucharistic action itself — the faith by which she responds to Christ’s gift in its true meaning”.<sup>59</sup>

Therefore the Second Vatican Council stated: “As for common worship (*communicatio in sacris*), however, it may not be regarded as a means to be used indiscriminately for the restoration of unity among Christians”<sup>60</sup>. Therefore, though a joint celebration by Catholics and Lutherans is for-

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<sup>58</sup> Smalcald Articles II, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Instruction of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity of 1st June, 1972, No. 2a.

<sup>60</sup> Vatican II, Decree on Ecumenism, No. 8.

bidden, admission to the Catholic celebration of the Eucharist is possible, "given sufficient reasons" (*propter rationes sufficientes*)<sup>61</sup>.

73. The Lutheran church is also aware of the link between eucharistic communion and communion between churches. Nevertheless, it recognizes, even in the present state of church division, a number of possibilities of eucharistic fellowship. The criteria it employs enables it to acknowledge the validity of the eucharistic celebration of others more freely than does the Roman Catholic Church. "Because of the already noted similarities in the understanding of the gospel, which has decisive effects on proclamation, administration of the sacraments and liturgical practice, the Lutherans feel that even now exchange of pulpits and common eucharistic celebrations [with the Catholic Church] can on occasion be recommended . . . The Lutherans emphasized that the communion practices of the separated churches must receive their orientation from that which is demanded of the church by the ministry of reconciliation among men . . . A celebration of the Lord's Supper in which baptized believers may not participate, suffers from an inner contradiction and from the start, therefore, does not fulfil the purpose for which the Lord established it."<sup>62</sup>

## II. Liturgical Form

74. The truth affirmed in faith about the Eucharist must shape the content and form of the liturgy. This involves a common duty which in large measure can and must be cooperatively discharged. At the same time, tasks and approaches vary because of the different types of churches, historical periods and traditions.

75. "The best way toward unity in eucharistic celebration and communion is the renewal of the eucharist itself in the different churches in regard to teaching and liturgy."<sup>63</sup> In the Eucharist, too, it is progress towards the centre which brings us nearer to each other. This means that "the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their thoughts match their words, and that they cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain"<sup>64</sup>.

The call for renewal must always point in two directions: first to the Lord, his word and his will, and then to the people around us with all their difficulties and potentialities: the "small flock" of fellow Christians, as well as

<sup>61</sup> Directory of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity I, No. 55.

<sup>62</sup> Malta, Nos. 64 and 72.

<sup>63</sup> Accra, Eucharist, No. 31.

<sup>64</sup> Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, No. 11.



the innumerable multitude of fellow human beings for whose salvation the Eucharist is intended.

The common witness of eucharistic faith and the common attempt to do justice to this life have nothing to do with uniformity. Just as in theology and piety there is also a variety of possibilities in liturgical forms. These can and indeed should illuminate and complement each other. What is true of church life as a whole is also true of liturgical forms: "Thus in their diversity all bear witness to the admirable unity of the Body of Christ. This very diversity of graces, ministries, and works gathers the children of God into one, because 'all these things are the work of one and the same spirit' (1 Cor. 12: 11)."<sup>65</sup>

76. Without impairing this diversity, greater *agreement in certain basic patterns* needs to be sought.

According to common conviction, the eucharistic celebration forms a whole which includes a number of constitutive elements. Among these are: proclamation of the word of God, thanksgiving for the acts of God in creation and redemption together with the remembering of the death and resurrection of Christ, the words of institution in accordance with the witness of the New Testament, the invocation of the Holy Spirit on bread and wine and on the congregation, intercession for the church and the world, the Lord's prayer and eating and drinking in communion with Christ and every member of the church.<sup>66</sup>

Liturgical practice should correspond to this jointly affirmed fundamental pattern. In addition to the common tasks which this agreement implies, there are others which involve special challenges to our churches.

Lutherans are convinced that Catholics should seek:

1. the avoidance of celebrations of the Mass without participation of the people;
2. better use of the possibilities for proclamation within each celebration of the Eucharist;
3. the administration of Holy Communion under both species.

Catholics are convinced that Lutherans should seek:

1. more frequent celebrations of Holy Communion ("As the eucharist is the new liturgical service Christ has given to the Church, it seems normal that it should be celebrated not less frequently than every Sunday, or once a week"<sup>67</sup>);

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<sup>65</sup> Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, No. 32.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Accra, Eucharist, No. 28.

<sup>67</sup> Accra, Eucharist, No. 33.

2. a greater participation by the congregation as a whole (particularly by children);
3. a closer link between liturgy of the word and liturgy of the sacrament.

It should be acknowledged that the differences in practice reflected in these diverse requests are connected with continuing differences in the understanding of faith. We must join together in clarifying and overcoming them.

### III. Reception

77. A theological teaching remains a theory of individuals as long as it is not affirmed and adopted by the whole people of God. Even conciliar declarations only come fully into effect when they take shape in the life and thought of the faithful. It is therefore essential that our common witness to the Lord's Supper evoke response and co-responsibility from our fellow Christians. We thus turn to them with the request that they examine and consider our reflections in order to improve them where needed and make them their own in so far as possible.

This document was signed by all members of the joint commission:

Roman Catholic Members:

The Rt. Rev. H. L. Martensen (chairperson)

Prof. J. Hoffmann

The Rev. J. F. Hotchkin

Prof. Dr. St. Napiorkowski

Dr. Vinzenz Pfnür

Weihbischof Prof. Dr. P.-W. Scheele

Lutheran Members:

Prof. Dr. G. A. Lindbeck (chairperson)

The Rt. Rev. D. H. Dietzfelbinger

The Rev. Dr. K. Hafenscher

Drs. P. Nasution

Dr. Lars Thunberg

Prof. Dr. Bertoldo Weber

The secretaries of the joint commission are:

Prof. Dr. H. Schütte (Roman Catholic)

Prof. Dr. V. Vajta (Lutheran)



# The Liturgical Celebration of the Eucharist

## The Celebration of Holy Eucharist in the Roman Catholic Church

The celebration has two main parts:

### I. OPENING AND LITURGY OF THE WORD

Entrance Antiphon

Greeting to the congregation and introduction

Penitential rite

Kyrie: Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy.

Gloria: Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth, etc.

Opening Prayer

Readings, Responsorial Psalm, Alleluia

Reading of the Gospel

Homily

Profession of Faith (Creed)

Prayers of the faithful.

### II. LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the gifts

Prayer over the gifts

Eucharistic Prayer, starting with the Preface

(see below the texts of the Eucharistic Prayers I, II, III and IV).

Eucharistic Prayer II

P. The Lord be with you.

C. And also with you.

- P. Lift up your hearts.
- C. We lift them up to the Lord.
- P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C. It is right to give him thanks and praise.
- P. Father, it is our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere, to give you thanks through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ.  
He is the word through whom you made the universe, the Saviour you sent to redeem us. By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary. For our sake he opened his arms on the cross; he put an end to death and revealed the resurrection. In this he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people. And so we join the angels and the saints in proclaiming your glory as we sing (say):
- C. Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.
- P. Lord, you are holy indeed,  
the fountain of all holiness. Let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, so that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Before he was given up to death, a death he freely accepted, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:  
Take this, all of you and eat it. This is my body which will be given up for you.

When supper was ended, he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples, and said:  
Take this, all of you, and drink from it. This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all men so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

- C. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again (or another similar formula).
- P. In memory of his death and resurrection, we offer you, Father, this life-giving bread, this saving cup. We thank you for counting us

worthy to stand in your presence and serve you. May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit.

Lord, remember your church throughout the world; make us grow in love, together with N. our Pope, N. our bishop, and all the clergy. Remember our brothers and sisters who have gone to their rest in the hope of rising again; bring them and all the departed into the light of your presence.

Have mercy on us all; make us worthy to share eternal life with Mary, the virgin mother of God, with the apostles, and with all the saints who have done your will throughout the ages. May we praise you in unity with them, and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

C. Amen.

## Communion Rite

### *THE LORD'S PRAYER*

P. Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Saviour gave us:

*or:*

Jesus taught us to call God our Father, and so we have the courage to say:

*or:*

Let us ask our Father to forgive our sins and to bring us to forgive those who sin against us:

*or:*

Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom as Jesus taught us:

C. Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

- P. Deliver us, Lord, from every evil,  
and grant us peace in our day.  
In your mercy keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety  
as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus  
Christ.
- C. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

### *PRAYER FOR PEACE*

- P. Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles: I leave you peace, my  
peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your  
church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom, where  
you live for ever and ever!
- The peace of the Lord be with you always.
- C. And also with you.

### *BREAKING OF THE BREAD — Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)*

- C. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
grant us peace.
- P. This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.  
Happy are those who are called to his supper.
- C. Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I  
shall be healed.

### *DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION*

#### *COMMUNION ANTIPHON*

#### *PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION*

#### *BLESSING AND DISMISSAL*

- P. The Lord be with you.
- C. And also with you.
- P. May almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



C. Amen.

P. Go in the peace of Christ.

C. Thanks be to God.

As in the Eucharistic Prayer II, also in the Eucharistic Prayer IV the Preface constitutes an integral part, while in the Eucharistic Prayers I and III the preface changes according to different seasons and feasts.

### Eucharistic Prayer I (The Roman Canon)

After the Preface and the Sanctus the priest says:

P. We come to you, Father, with praise and thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ your Son. Through him we ask you to accept and bless these gifts we offer you in sacrifice. We offer them for your holy catholic church, watch over it, Lord, and guide it; grant it peace and unity throughout the world. We offer them for N. our Pope, for N. our bishop, and for all who hold and teach the catholic faith that comes to us from the apostles.

Remember, Lord, your people, especially those for whom we now pray, N. and N. Remember all of us gathered here before you. You know how firmly we believe in you and dedicate ourselves to you. We offer you this sacrifice of praise for ourselves and those who are dear to us. We pray to you, our living and true God, for our well-being and redemption.

In union with the whole church we honour Mary, the ever-virgin mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God. We honour Joseph, her husband, the apostles and martyrs Peter and Paul, Andrew (James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Jude; we honour Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian) and all the saints. May their merits and prayers gain us your constant help and protection.

Father, accept this offering from your whole family. Grant us your peace in this life, save us from final damnation, and count us among those you have chosen.

Bless and approve our offering; make it acceptable to you, an offering in spirit and in truth. Let it become for us the body and blood of Jesus Christ, your only Son, our Lord.

The day before he suffered he took bread in his sacred hands and looking up to heaven, to you, his almighty Father, he gave you thanks and praise.

He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:  
Take this, all of you, and eat it. This is my body which will be given up for you.

When supper was ended, he took the cup. Again he gave thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples, and said:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it. This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all men so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

- C. Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.
- P. Father, we celebrate the memory of Christ, your Son. We, your people and your ministers, recall his passion, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into glory; and from the many gifts you have given us we offer to you, God of glory and majesty, this holy and perfect sacrifice: the bread of life, and the cup of eternal salvation.

Look with favour on these offerings and accept them as once you accepted the gifts of your servant Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith, and the bread and wine offered by your priest Melchisedech.

Almighty God, we pray that your angel may take this sacrifice to your altar in heaven. Then, as we receive from this altar the sacred body and blood of your Son, let us be filled with every grace and blessing.

Remember, Lord, those who have died and have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, especially those for whom we now pray, N. and N. May these, and all who sleep in Christ, find in your presence light, happiness, and peace.

For ourselves, too, we ask some share in the fellowship of your apostles and martyrs, with John the Baptist, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas (Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia) and all the saints. Though we are sinners, we trust in your mercy and love. Do not consider what we truly deserve, but grant us your forgiveness.

Through Christ our Lord you give us all these gifts. You fill them with life and goodness, you bless them and make them holy.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

- C. Amen.

### Eucharistic Prayer III

After the Preface and the Sanctus the priest says:

- P. Father, you are holy indeed, and all creation rightly gives you praise. All life, all holiness comes from you through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, by the working of the Holy Spirit. From age to age you gather a people to yourself, so that from east to west a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name.

And so, Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit, that they may become the body and blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this Eucharist. On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks and praise. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said:

Take this, all of you, and eat it. This is my body which will be given up for you.

When supper was ended, he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples, and said:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it. This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all men so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

- C. Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.
- P. Father, calling to mind the death your Son endured for our salvation, his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven, and ready to greet him when he comes again, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice.

Look with favour on your church's offering, and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself. Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ.

May he make us an everlasting gift to you and enable us to share in the inheritance of your saints, with Mary, the virgin mother of God, with the apostles, the martyrs (Saint N. — the patron saint or the saint of the day) and all your saints, on whose constant intercession we rely for help.

Lord, may this sacrifice, which has made our peace with you, advance the peace and salvation of all the world. Strengthen in faith and love your pilgrim church on earth; your servant, Pope N., our



bishop N., and all the bishops, with the clergy and the entire people your Son has gained for you.

Father, hear the prayers of the family you have gathered here before you. In mercy and love unite all your children wherever they may be.

Welcome into your kingdom our departed brothers and sisters, and all who have left this world in your friendship. We hope to enjoy forever the vision of your glory, through Christ our Lord, from whom all good things come.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

C. Amen.

## Eucharistic Prayer IV

### *PREFACE*

P. Father in heaven, it is right that we should give you thanks and glory: you alone are God, living and true. Through all eternity you live in unapproachable light. Source of life and goodness, you have created all things, to fill your creatures with every blessing and lead all men to the joyful vision of your light. Countless hosts of angels stand before you to do your will; they look upon your splendour and praise you, night and day. United with them, and in the name of every creature under heaven, we too praise your glory as we sing (say):

C. Holy, holy, holy Lord . . .

P. Father, we acknowledge your greatness: all your actions show your wisdom and love.

You formed man in your own likeness and set him over the whole world to serve you, his creator, and to rule over all creatures.

Even when he disobeyed you and lost your friendship you did not abandon him to the power of death, but helped all men to seek and find you.

Again and again you offered a covenant to man, and through the prophets taught him to hope for salvation.

Father, you so loved the world that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Saviour. He was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, a man like us in all things but sin.

To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation, to prisoners, freedom, and to those in sorrow, joy.



In fulfilment of your will he gave himself up to death; but by rising from the dead, he destroyed death and restored life.

And that we might live no longer for ourselves but for him, he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father, as his first gift to those who believe, to complete his work on earth and bring us the fullness of grace.

Father, may this Holy Spirit sanctify these offerings. Let them become the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord as we celebrate the great mystery which he left us as an everlasting covenant.

He always loved those who were his own in the world. When the time came for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, he showed the depth of his love. While they were at supper, he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take this, all of you, and eat it. This is my body which will be given up for you.

In this same way, he took the cup, filled with wine. He gave you thanks, and giving the cup to his disciples, said:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it. This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all men so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

- C. Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.
- P. Father, we now celebrate the memorial of our redemption. We recall Christ's death, his descent among the dead, his resurrection and his ascension to your right hand; and, looking forward to his coming in glory, we offer you his body and blood, the acceptable sacrifice which brings salvation to the whole world.

Lord, look upon this sacrifice which you have given to your church; and by your Holy Spirit gather all who share this bread and wine into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise.

Lord, remember those for whom we offer this sacrifice, especially N. our Pope, N. our bishop, and bishops and clergy everywhere. Remember those who take part in this offering, those here present and all your people, and all who seek you with a sincere heart.

Remember those who have died in the peace of Christ and all the dead whose faith is known to you alone. Father, in your mercy grant also to us, your children, to enter into our heavenly inheritance in the company of the Virgin Mary, the mother of God, and your apostles and saints. Then, in your kingdom, freed from the corruption of sin

and death, we shall sing your glory with every creature through Christ our Lord, through whom you give us everything that is good.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

C. Amen.

## The Liturgy of Holy Communion in the Evangelical Lutheran Churches \*

### A. Order for Holy Communion

from the *Agende für evangelisch-lutherische Kirchen und Gemeinden I* (1955) incorporating 1976 and 1977 revisions offered for trial use.

#### I. OPENING AND INVOCATIONS

Introit (may be omitted)

Preparatory Prayer of the congregation (may be omitted): Confession of Sins

Entrance Hymn or Introit or both

Kyrie and Gloria in excelsis

Salutation and Collect for the Day

#### II. PROCLAMATION AND PROFESSION

Old Testament Lesson (may be omitted)

Gradual Hymn (may be omitted at this point)

Epistle

Alleluia, occasionally with Gradual Hymn

Gospel

Creed

Sermon

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\* The liturgical tradition in the Lutheran churches varies according to language and country. A representative selection of liturgies for Holy Communion is printed here. Examples come from majority churches as well as from minority churches. There are also supplementary forms for the Holy Communion, especially for occasions other than the full liturgical service for Sundays. The following examples are limited to the Holy Communion for Sundays and principal festivals.

Hymn after the Sermon  
Announcements  
Offering  
Prayer of the Church (Intercessions)

### III. THE HOLY COMMUNION

#### *PREFACE* (Great Thanksgiving)

- P. The Lord be with you.  
C. And with your spirit.  
P. Lift up your hearts!  
C. We lift them to the Lord.  
P. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.  
C. It is estimable and right.

(25 Prefaces for the church year; for example for general use:)

- P. It is truly, estimable and right, just and salutary, that at all times and in all places we give you thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. You sent him for the salvation of the world that by his death we might have forgiveness of sins and by his resurrection we might have life. Through him the angels praise your majesty, the heavenly hosts adore you, and the powers tremble; together with the blessed Seraphim all the citizens of heaven praise you in brilliant jubilation. Unite our voices with theirs and let us sing praise in endless adoration:
- C. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

*CONSECRATION* (using forms A, B, or C, as follows)

#### (A)

- P. Our Father in heaven . . . deliver us from the Evil One.  
C. For yours is the kingdom . . . for ever. Amen.  
P. Our Lord Jesus Christ in the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat; this † is my body, given for you; do this in remembrance of me. In like manner he took the cup, after supper, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying: Take and drink from it, all of you; this cup is



the new covenant in † my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

(B)

(Alternate eucharistic prayer, page 42, may be used instead)

- P. We praise you, Lord of heaven and earth that you showed your creatures mercy, and that you have sent your only Son in our flesh. We thank you for the salvation you have prepared for us through the holy and all-sufficient sacrifice of his body and blood on the tree of the cross. Gathered in his name and for his remembrance, we pray: Lord, send down upon us the Holy Spirit, sanctify and renew us in body and soul, and grant that under this bread and wine we receive in true faith the very body and blood of your Son to our salvation, since even now we make use of Christ's own testament according to his command.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in the night in which he was betrayed ...  
(cf. A above).

Therefore we remember, Lord, heavenly Father, the saving passion and death of your dear Son Jesus Christ. We praise his victorious resurrection from the dead and are comforted by his ascension into your heavenly sanctuary where he, our High Priest, continually intercedes for us. And as all of us are one body in Christ through the fellowship of his body and blood, so gather your faithful people from the ends of the earth, that together with all the faithful we may celebrate in his kingdom the marriage feast of the Lamb. Through him be praise and honour, glory and adoration, almighty God, in the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

- C. Amen.
- P. Our Father in heaven ... deliver us from the Evil One.
- C. For yours is the kingdom ... for ever. Amen.
- P. The peace of the Lord be with you all.
- C. Amen.
- C. Hymn: "O Christ, Lamb of God", or "Lamb of God, pure and sinless"

(C)

- C. Communion Hymn
- P. Our Saviour, Jesus Christ invites us to his table where he wills to give us that power and comfort which proceed from his death and resur-



rection. In bread and wine, the signs of his presence, he unites himself with us and draws us together as members of his church (*Gemeinde*).

Our Lord Jesus Christ in the night in which he was betrayed . . .  
(cf. A above).

As often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death, until he comes.

In this supper which Jesus Christ shared with his disciples, he wills to be with us with all he has to give. Nothing now can separate us from God any longer, not even those things which may torment us: our doubts, our failures, our guilt. No longer are we left alone.

Merciful God and Father, you sent your Son to us, and you have invited us to return home to you. You are greater than all those things which grieve us and cause us anxiety. Since your Son has given himself for us, receive us. Renew and sanctify our life that nothing is able to separate us from your love.

- C. Lord, we believe, help our unbelief!
- P. If this is your prayer, join your voice in the petition:  
O Christ, Lamb of God, who bear the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
- C. Hymn: "O Christ, Lamb of God" . . .
- P. Lord, have mercy on us!
- C. Lord, have mercy on us!
- P. Our Lord Jesus Christ invites you to receive his forgiveness under the bread and wine. Come, for he has made preparations for you. Blessed are those who eat bread in the kingdom of God.

#### *DISTRIBUTION (COMMUNIO)*

#### *THANKSGIVING AND DISMISSAL*

- P. The Lord be with you.
- C. And with your spirit.
- P. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good (*Alleluia*).
- C. And his mercy endures for ever (*Alleluia*).

(30 Versicles for the church year)

(30 Collects for the church year; for example for general use:)

- P. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit forever and ever.

C. Amen.

Dismissal and Benediction.

Alternate Eucharistic Prayers for Form B

1.

- P. We praise you, Lord of heaven and earth. You have had mercy on your creatures and have sent your Son in human flesh. We thank you for the redemption which he accomplished on the cross. We pray: Send down upon us the Holy Spirit, sanctify and renew us in body and soul, so that under this bread and wine we receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ to our salvation, as we now do what he commanded:

Our Lord Jesus Christ in the night in which he was betrayed . . .  
(cf. A above)

- C. (may sing or say:) We proclaim your death, O Lord, and we praise your resurrection, until you come again in glory.
- P. So we remember, heavenly Father, the suffering and death of your Son. We praise his resurrection and ascension, and we rely on his lordship over all the world. We pray: Just as all who receive his body are *one* body in Christ, so gather together your people from the ends of the earth, and let us with all faithful people celebrate the eternal feast of joy in his kingdom. Through him be praise and honour, glory and adoration, almighty God, in the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

C. Amen.

Our Father in heaven . . .

2.

- P. We glorify you, Lord, and sing your praise. You have not abandoned to sin and death that which you, almighty God, have made. Through Jesus Christ, your word, you summon us all to life. He took our guilt upon himself and made peace between you and all people.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in the night in which he was betrayed . . .  
(cf. A above)

C. We proclaim your death, O Lord, and we praise your resurrection, until you come again in glory.

P. Therefore we give you thanks, heavenly Father, for the life and passion of your Son, and for his sacrifice on the cross. We praise his resurrection, the victory over evil and death. Give us, Lord, the Holy Spirit, and renew our life through him. Bring together in the unity of faith all who share the body and blood of Christ; unite them in the fellowship of love and in the hope of your glory.

*(Maranatha!)* Our Lord comes.

C. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Our Father in heaven ...

3.

*(Without Preface and Sanctus)*

P. Lord, our God, Ruler over all. We praise you for the wonder of your creation. You bless human labour and endow us with life and joy. You have given us bread and wine that we may celebrate the supper of your Son. We thank you for the mystery of your love. Receive us anew as your own that our conduct may honour you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in the night in which he was betrayed ...  
(cf. A above)

C. We proclaim your death, O Lord, and we praise your resurrection, until you come again in glory.

P. So we remember, Father, the life he gave up for all people, and his resurrection from the dead. He offered himself for the world's salvation and is established as Lord over all the powers. Send us the Holy Spirit, that through these gifts he would fill us with new life. Bind together in the fellowship of the faith all those who belong to your people. Have mercy upon your church and give it unity in this supper of joy. O God, we await your great day.

*(Maranatha!)* Our Lord comes.

C. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Our Father in heaven ...

4.

*(After Preface and Sanctus)*

P. We praise the eternal, holy God: who wonderfully preserves his creation; who governs the course of the world according to his counsel;

and who elected his people to be the witness of his mercy. We thank him that he sent us his Son, the messenger of his love, who supports us and our guilt, and stands by us in every need; who loved us to the end.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in the night in which he was betrayed . . .  
(cf. A above)

Deacon: As often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death, until he comes.

- C. We proclaim your death, O Lord, and we praise your resurrection, until you come again in glory.
- P. Therefore we remember his suffering and death, his resurrection and his future. At his table he gives us fellowship with God and love for all humankind.

Deacon: Our thoughts and our deeds belong to him. He sets us on the way of peace. May he bless us in his supper, and sanctify our life through his Spirit.

- C. Hymn: "Come, Holy Spirit, and fill the hearts of the faithful" or another hymn of invocation of the Holy Spirit.

## 5.

- P. We praise you, almighty God, that you gave your Son over [to death], Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who was obedient even unto death.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in the night in which he was betrayed . . .  
(cf. A above)

So we remember his death, and we pray: Fill us with your Spirit. Bless to us these gifts. Through this bread which we share with one another give us fellowship with Jesus Christ. Through this cup from which we drink unite us with him. Remember your church (*Gemeinde*), scattered throughout the world, and bring us together into your kingdom. To you be all honour forever.

Our Father in heaven . . .

## B. Order for Holy Communion

from the *Lutheran Book of Worship* 1978 (Lutheran Churches of North America)

Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness (not part of the eucharistic rite)



(The Liturgy is not subdivided, but rubrics provide for its use as a "preaching service".)

Entrance Hymn or Psalm

Apostolic Greeting

Kyrie (Eastern form)

\* Gloria in excelsis *or* Worthy is Christ, the Lamb

Prayer of the Day

First Lesson

Responsorial Psalm

Second Lesson

Verse (Alleluia or Tract)

Holy Gospel

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

\* Nicene or Apostles' Creed

The Prayers

Offering and Offertory

(Prayers after the gifts are presented)

- P. Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us — ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*or*

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Preparation of the bread and wine which have been part of the offering.)

\* Sanctus

Dialogue and Preface

P. The Lord be with you.

C. And also with you.

P. Lift up your hearts.

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\* Text used was prepared by the International Consultation on English Texts, 1975 version.

- C. We lift them to the Lord.
- P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C. It is right to give him thanks and praise.
- P. It is indeed right and salutary . . .  
 . . . we praise your Name and join their unending hymn:  
 (The service continues, using option 1, 2 or 3.)

1.

- P. Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: endless is your mercy and eternal your reign. You have filled all creation with light and life: heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Through Abraham you promised to bless all nations. You rescued Israel, your chosen people. Through the Prophets you renewed your promise; and, at this end of all the ages, you sent your Son, who in words and deeds proclaimed your kingdom and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people, for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death, until he comes.

- C. Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.
- P. Therefore, gracious Father, with this bread and cup we remember the life our Lord offered for us. And, believing the witness of his resurrection, we await his coming in power to share with us the great and promised feast.
- C. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
- P. Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, the Spirit of our Lord and of his resurrection, that we who receive the Lord's body and blood may live to the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.
- C. Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.
- P. Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great High Priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

- C. Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

2.

- P. In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people, for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

3.

- P. Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.
- C. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
- P. In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

\* Lord's Prayer

Communion

\* Agnus Dei as a communion hymn

Post-communion

Canticle: Thank the Lord and sing his praise *or* Nunc dimittis

Collect

Silence

Benediction

Dismissal

(Alternate eucharistic prayers)

A.

- P. You are indeed holy, O God, the fountain of all holiness; you bring light from darkness, life from death, speech from silence. We worship you for our lives and for the world you give us. We thank you for the new world to come and for the love that will rule all in all. We praise you for the grace shown to Israel, your chosen, the people of your promise: the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land, the memory of the fathers, the homecoming from exile, and the prophets' words that will not be in vain. In all this we bless you for your only-begotten Son, who fulfilled and will fulfill all your promises.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

- C. Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

- P. Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup we remember the incarnation of your Son: his human birth and the covenant he made with us. We remember the sacrifice of his life: his eating with outcasts and sinners, and his acceptance of death. But chiefly [on this day] we remember his rising from the tomb, his ascension to the seat of power, and his sending of the holy and life-giving Spirit. We cry out for the resurrection of our lives, when Christ will come again in beauty and power to share with us the great and promised feast.

- C. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

- P. Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that we and all who share in this bread and cup may be united in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, may enter the fullness of the kingdom of heaven, and may receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

- C. Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

- P. Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

- C. Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.



B.

- P. You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God; you are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory. You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. Having come into the world, he fulfilled for us your holy will and accomplished our salvation.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command, his life-giving Passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and his promise to come again, we give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, not as we ought, but as we are able; and we implore you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving, and, with your Word and Holy Spirit, to bless us, your servants, and these your own gifts of bread and wine; that we and all who share in the body and blood of your Son may be filled with heavenly peace and joy, and, receiving the forgiveness of sin, may be sanctified in soul and body, and have our portion with all your saints. All honor and glory are yours, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, now and forever.

- C. Amen.

C.

Prayer of Hippolytus

**C. Order for Holy Communion**

in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of France

Meditation (with or without organ music)

A psalm or hymn is sung

Invocation

Introit

Glory be to the Father ...

Confession of sins

Lord, have mercy ...

Assurance of grace and absolution

Glory to God ...

V. The Lord be with you! (recited or sung)  
R. The Lord be with you!  
Collect  
Reading from the Old Testament  
Antiphon and psalm  
Reading of the Epistle  
Amen, Alleluia!  
Reading of the Gospel  
Praise to you, O Christ!  
Confession of faith (unless placed after the sermon)  
Hymn  
Prayer  
Sermon  
Meditation (with or without organ music)  
Confession of faith (unless placed after the readings)  
Hymn (chosen according to preference from among the hymns of personal dedication)  
Announcements  
Offering and offertory prayer  
Intercessory prayer

### *EUCCHARISTIC DIALOGUE*

The sacrifice acceptable to the Lord is a contrite and broken heart;  
O God, do not despise the heart which humbles itself before you.

Create in me a clean heart, O God . . .

V. The Lord be with you!

R. The Lord be with you!

V. Lift up our hearts!

R. We lift them up to the Lord!

V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R. That is right and just.

### *PREFACE*

It is truly right and just that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, almighty God, holy and eternal Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for your infinite glory and your redemptive love. For you have created the heavens and all the hosts thereof, the earth and its grandeur, you have given us being and life and you safeguard us by your providence. But you have manifested your love above all by sending into the world your beloved Son, your eternal word and visible image, in

whom dwells corporeally the fullness of divinity, who lowered himself to us in order to lift us up to you. For the precious gift of this powerful Saviour, the Son of man who went from place to place doing good, the holy and adorable victim burdened with our iniquities, the loving mediator who has reconciled us with you, and the living bread given for the nourishment of the world, we praise you and we bless you, O Lord God. Thus with the universal church, with the saints in glory, with the angels and with all the company of heaven, we praise you and we magnify your name, we exalt you and we sing:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth . . .

### *CONSECRATION*

Send your Holy Spirit upon us your chosen people, and with your power penetrate the entire church. May this Spirit of life make of these earthly elements which you have given us spiritual food for us. Thus in this bread and in this wine may we have communion with the body and blood of our Saviour who, in the night in which he was betrayed, supped with his disciples, took bread and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to them saying: Take and eat, this is my body (the officiant, who has broken a host, presents it) given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying: Drink of this, all of you, this is my blood (the officiant elevates the cup), the blood of the new covenant, shed for you and for all people, for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, for the remembrance of me.

Let every creature keep silence. Let us adore the Lord.

Silence

O God, we stand before you to accomplish the sacred act which your Son commanded of us:

we announce his redemptive death,  
we proclaim his glorious resurrection and ascension,  
and in the joyful hope of his return,  
we celebrate his sacrifice, beseeching you to bring all men  
to accept from it the power of salvation.

For us, sinners, who have no refuge but in your mercy,  
deign to receive the prayer of your Son in our behalf.  
For it is through him that you create, that you sanctify,  
that you vivify, that you bless and that you give all good things.

It is through him, and with him, and in him, that every honour and all glory are given to you, O God almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, from age to age. Amen.

Our Father ...

The peace of the Lord be always with you!

O Christ, Lamb of God ...

Prayer

As the wheat once scattered in the fields and the grapes once spread across the hillsides are now reunited on this table in this bread and wine, so also, Lord, may all your church soon be brought together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

Humble approach

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter my dwelling, but only say a word and I shall be healed.

Invitation

Come, all is ready.

Communion

### *PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING*

V. Rejoice in the Lord, for he is good!

R. And his mercy endures forever!

We give you thanks, almighty God, for having restored our souls by the saving gifts of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we ask that in your mercy you strengthen our faith and make a fervent love reign among us, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour. Amen.

### *BLESSING*

## **D. Order for Holy Communion**

from the *Agende of the Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession* (1954) and the *Slovak Liturgy* (1960)

### **I. Service of the Word**

Introit — special Hymn

Kyrie eleison — Hymn: appropriate to the church year; different each time.

Gloria in excelsis (sung by pastor and congregation)

Salutation (sung by pastor and congregation)

Collect for the Day (sung by pastor)

Epistle (sung by pastor)

Gradual Hymn

Salutation



Gospel (sung by pastor)

Creed — as a rule, Credo Hymn: appropriate to the church year; different each time. On some Sundays, however, the Creed is spoken by the congregation and there is no hymn.

Sermon

General Prayer — Intercessions

## II. Confession of Sins and Absolution

Address

Four Confessional Questions

Prayer of Confession

Absolution — general and then personal absolution at the altar. Before the absolution the congregation is asked whether it believes that they receive forgiveness through the pastor [i.e. through the Absolution].

## III. Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Preface — Lift up your hearts . . .

Sanctus — Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth . . .

Our Father ... (sung by the pastor). Congregation: Amen.

Words of Institution, Consecration (sung by the pastor. The congregation sings following each part of the text.)

Agnus Dei

Prayer before Communion

P. Lord Jesus Christ, we desire to receive your holy body and blood. May receiving them help us now and eternally. We surrender ourselves completely to your wounds of compassion. Grant that we are never separated from you. Preserve us from the devil and confirm us in true faith unto the last when, with all the saints, we can behold you and praise you forever. Amen.

Distribution — Communion. Before the distribution the congregation is asked whether they believe that under the consecrated bread and wine they receive the true body and the true blood of Christ.

Thanksgiving Prayer after the Lord's Supper (spoken by the pastor).

## IV. Closing of the Service

Antiphon — biblical versicles sung in alternation by the pastor and the congregation.

Salutation (sung)

Post-Communion Collect (sung by the pastor). C. Amen, Amen, Amen.

Aaronic Benediction (sung by the pastor). C. Amen, Amen, Amen.  
Closing Hymn

Note: Such services of Holy Communion are celebrated in the Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession a few times during the year, especially at Confirmation, the Day of Humiliation and Prayer, on Maundy Thursday, etc. Normally, however, Confession and Communion (monthly) are celebrated before or — in other congregations — after the service.

## **E. Order for Holy Communion**

in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Preparation, with or without a Confession of Sin (Confiteor)

Introit

Kyrie, Gloria in excelsis

Collect

Lessons

Old Testament

Gradual Psalm (from Geneva Psalter)

Epistle

Alleluia Sentence and singing of the Alleluia

Gradual Hymn (Hymn of the Week)

Holy Gospel

C. Praise to you, O Lord.

Creed

The Creed may be read or sung (if sung, in the Dutch translation of "We all believe in one true God . . ."). It may be read or sung after the sermon; it is prescribed for Holy Communion.

Sermon

Sermon Hymn

The collection is received before or during the hymn.

Intercessions

Most often in litany form with the congregation's response being:  
Lord, have mercy.

Preface (antiphonally) with proper Thanksgiving

Sanctus and Benedictus

Eucharistic Prayer (*anamnesis* and *epiclesis*)

Words of Institution. These words may also be included in the Eucharistic Prayer. In that case also, the prayer concludes with Our Father . . .

Our Father . . .

Agnus Dei or Song of Praise from the Didache

Distribution

Post-Communion

Note: In 1955 the first hymnal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Netherlands appeared which was developed completely out of the liturgy. The liturgy itself adhered to the latest liturgical developments in the international Lutheran world, especially those in Germany and America.

At the appearance in 1973 of the new ecumenical hymnal, this liturgy was adopted practically without change. It is true that some opportunities for variation were introduced, an Old Testament Lesson established, and an *anamnesis* included in the celebration of the Eucharist.

## **F. Order for Holy Communion**

in the Church of Sweden

### **I. The Preparation**

Entrance: Hymn or Introit

Act of Reconciliation: Exhortation, Confession of Sins, Absolution, and  
Thanksgiving

Lord have mercy (Kyrie)

Gloria and Laudamus

### **II. The Liturgy of the Word**

Collect

Lessons: Old Testament and/or Epistle

Gradual Hymn

Gospel

Sermon

Confession of Faith: The Apostolic or the Nicene Creed

Announcements

Intercessions

### **III. The Liturgy of the Eucharist**

Preparation of the Table (Offertory)

An offertory hymn is sung, during which the elders or other worshippers may bring the bread and wine to the altar. Also the offering of money may be brought forward. The following may be said by the minister and those carrying the gifts:

Lord, of yours we give to you.

Receive us and our gifts for the sake of Jesus Christ.

C. Amen.

The Thanksgiving

### *Sursum Corda*

- P. Lift up your hearts.  
C. We lift them to the Lord.  
P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
C. He alone is worthy of our praise.

### *Preface*

- P. Indeed, you alone are worthy of our praise,  
almighty Father, holy God.  
You will we praise and bless  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

(Here follows one of ten Proper Prefaces, concluding with:)

- P. Therefore with all your faithful through all times,  
and with all the company of heaven, we praise your  
name and devoutly sing:

### *Sanctus*

- C. Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of Sabaoth.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

The Thanksgiving continued. One of the following prayers is said:

#### A.

- P. Praise be to you, Lord of heaven and earth, who have shown mercy towards mankind and given your only Son so that all who believe in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. We thank you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send your Spirit in our hearts that he might work in us a living faith. Sanctify also through your Spirit this bread and wine, fruits of the earth and the toil of people which we bear unto you, so that we, through them, partake of the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the night he was betrayed, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, and said: Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Likewise he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples and said: Drink this, all of you. This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Do this, so often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.



Therefore, Holy Father, we celebrate this meal in remembrance of the passion and death of your Son, his resurrection and ascension. We eat the bread of life and drink the cup of salvation until the day of his glorious return. We pray:

Look upon the perfect and everlasting sacrifice (or offering) through which you reconciled us to yourself in Christ. Through the Holy Spirit let us all be joined in one body and perfected to a living sacrifice in Christ.

Through whom and with whom and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory is yours, almighty God and Father for ever and ever.

C. Amen.

B.

P. We praise you, God, who hold heaven and earth in your hands. In you we live, move and have our being. Your mercy is better than life. Our lips shall praise you. We thank you for sending your Son to save the world. You let him suffer death upon the cross in order to exalt him and give him that name which is above all other names. Let your spirit touch us and these our gifts of bread and wine so that we, through them, share in Christ's body and blood.

In the night he was betrayed . . .

C. We proclaim his death, we confess his resurrection until the day he returns in glory.

P. Holy Father, when we celebrate the remembrance of our Saviour, you give us a part in his life, his death and resurrection, his heavenly glory. Here is his body and blood which has reconciled us with you. Through your Spirit make us all one in him, to reveal his life in the world. Let the day come soon when you create new heavens and a new earth where righteousness reigns. We praise you and glorify you through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, now, always and forever.

C. Amen.

C.

P. We thank you, Lord of heaven and earth, for opening your hand and satisfying all things living with your grace. You give us our daily bread, health and strength. From the wheat of the field and the grapes of the hillside you prepare bread and wine. You spread your table for us. Let your Spirit come to us and these gifts, so that we partake of the heavenly bread and the blessed cup that are the body and blood of Christ.

In the night he was betrayed . . .

- C. We proclaim his death, we confess his resurrection until the day he returns in glory.

(The prayer continues with one of the following alternatives:)

- P. Here we see your Son's passion and death, his resurrection from the dead and his life with you in glory. Here we meet him who prays for us and who shall come to judge the living and dead on the day that you decide. God, we thank you for your promise of new heavens and a new earth where righteousness reigns. We thank you for the hope of a blessed resurrection through your Son, our Saviour.

- C. Amen.

*or*

- P. Let all those who share this bread and this cup be joined through the Holy Spirit in a single body and perfected to a living sacrifice in Christ.

- C. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

The minister may say:

- P. In the Holy Spirit and with all your faithful we pray that prayer which your Son himself has taught us.

*or*

- P. Let us now pray as our Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us.

- C. Our Father . . .

The Breaking of the Bread (*Fractio*)

(May be deleted. If used, all will say, while the minister breaks the bread:)

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ. Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

The Peace of the Lord (*Pax*)

- P. The peace of the Lord be with you. (Greetings of peace may be exchanged.)

O Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*)

The Meal (*Communio*)

The Minister may say:

P. Come, all is ready.

To each communicant the minister says:

P. The body of Christ, given for you.  
The blood of Christ, shed for you.

If the elements are distributed by intinction:

P. The body and blood of Christ, given for you.

At the end of the distribution the minister says:

P. We have received the body and blood of Christ. He shall keep us to everlasting life.

C. Amen.

Prayer after the Communion

(There are ten alternatives, some of which are the following:)

General

P. We thank you, our God and Father, that through your Son, Jesus Christ, you have instituted the Holy Communion through which we receive consolation and everlasting bliss. We pray: Give us grace so to celebrate the remembrance of Jesus here on earth so that we also become partakers of the great Communion in heaven. You who live and reign for ever.

C. Amen.

Trinity

P. Thank you, Lord, for your gifts. Thank you for your love, your forgiveness, your nearness. Lord, remain with us. Thank you, for letting us leave this Communion with you in our hearts. Help us to carry out your love. Yours is the power and the glory for ever.

C. Amen.

General

P. We thank you Lord, for this sacramental mystery that once more you have let us share with you. Just as the bread and wine become one with our bodies, edifying us and renewing us, so you are joined with our whole being. Strengthened by the meal we joyfully leave your table, praising your everlasting presence.

C. Amen.

#### IV. Conclusion

(One of the following two alternate conclusions is used.)

##### A.

Thank and praise the Lord (*Benedicamus*)

The Blessing

Hymn

Postlude

##### B.

Hymn of Praise

The Blessing

The Sending

P. Go in peace and serve the Lord with gladness.

*or*

P. Let us go in peace.

C. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Postlude

The order for Holy Communion, which is reprinted here, has been authorized by the Synod of the Church of Sweden in 1975. Beginning on the First Sunday in Advent 1976 it may be used as an alternative to the liturgy of 1942. The introduction of the new order must be decided on by the congregation and agreed upon by the minister and the local church council.



## Supplementary Studies

# 1. The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

In defining their position, particularly to distinguish themselves from the Enthusiasts (*Schwärmer*) and the followers of Zwingli, the Lutheran Reformers, in fundamental agreement with the Roman Catholic Church, have always stressed that Jesus Christ, in his body and blood, is truly present in the Lord's Supper and allows himself to be received by us under the form of bread and wine; this presence is derived from the power of the Holy Spirit through the word that instituted the Lord's Supper; it is not brought about by the faith of the community or by some individual, although it is faith-orientated.

"It is taught among us that the true body and blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received." According to the Apology the adherents to the Lutheran Reformation affirm the teaching, held by the whole church, "that in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially (*vere et substantialiter*) present and are truly offered with those things that are seen, the bread and the wine (*cum his rebus, quae videntur, pane et vino*)"<sup>1</sup>. The body and blood of Christ "are given and received not only by godly but also by wicked Christians"<sup>2</sup>.

To all intents and purposes, differences in doctrine existed and exist only with respect to two points:

### 1. Regarding the Mode of the Real Presence (*modus praesentiae*)

Luther rejects the doctrine of transubstantiation in so far as its philosophical implications are understood as a dogma which binds the con-

<sup>1</sup> Ap X, I.4, BSLK 247f.; The Book of Concord 179.

<sup>2</sup> SA III, 6, BSLK 451; The Book of Concord 311; cf. CA X, 1: "... distribuantur vescentibus"; Ap X, 1: "... vere exhibeantur ... his, qui sacramentum accipiant".

science.<sup>3</sup> When Luther in his treatise *De captivitate Babylonica* attacks "that Babel of a philosophy of a constant quantity distinct from the substance" (*Babylonia illa philosophiae istius de quantitate continua distincta a substantia*),<sup>4</sup> it becomes clear that he is following Ockham's interpretation of Aristotle, according to which quantity cannot be separated from substance, and therefore he is fighting the thomistic understanding of transubstantiation.<sup>5</sup> This change in the idea of substance, which differs from that of High Scholasticism, makes an understanding of transubstantiation, which does justice to the concept, difficult to this day.<sup>6</sup> The Smalcald Articles see in it a sophistic subtlety. The Formula of Concord rejects the doctrine of transubstantiation together with that according to which the body and blood of Christ are "under one form as under both"<sup>7</sup>. The Apology does not conform to the Confutation's demand to accept transubstantiation explicitly,<sup>8</sup> but replies that the "bodily presence of Christ" is believed and that agreement therefore exists with the Church of Rome just as with the Greek Church, when the latter says that the bread is not just symbolically changed, but that it is truly changed into the body of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

One must therefore ask oneself whether a Catholic/Lutheran consensus in the matter of eucharistic doctrine and practice is endangered or hindered by this difference in understanding the manner of the real presence. This need not be the case if both sides were to profess the reality of the presence in a sufficiently clear and unambiguous manner and, further, if the mystery-character of the Eucharist and the eucharistic presence of the Lord

<sup>3</sup> Luther accepts this as a widely held view in *De captivitate Babylonica* and in a letter of 1543 to the Protestants in Venice, Vicenza and Treviso: WA 6, 508 = Am 36, 30; WABr 10, 331.

<sup>4</sup> WA 6, 510 = Am 36, 32.

<sup>5</sup> Compare L. Grane, "Luthers Kritik an Thomas von Aquin in *De captivitate Babylonica*", *ZKG* 80, 1969, 1-13; H. Hilgenfeld, *Mittelalterlich-traditionelle Elemente in Luthers Abendmahlsschriften*, Zürich 1971, 183ff. 407; E. Iserloh, *Gnade und Eucharistie in der philosophischen Theologie des Wilhelm von Ockham*, Wiesbaden 1956, 175-253.

<sup>6</sup> Compare J. Ratzinger, "Das Problem der Transsubstantiation und die Frage nach dem Sinn der Eucharistie", *ThQ* 147, 1967, 129-158.

<sup>7</sup> SA III, 6, BSLK 452; The Book of Concord 311; SD VII, 14, BSLK 977; The Book of Concord 571; FC Ep. VII, 22, BSLK 801; The Book of Concord 484; FC SD VII, 35 and 108, BSLK 983 and 1010; The Book of Concord 575 and 588.

<sup>8</sup> CR 27, 107.

<sup>9</sup> Ap X, 2, BSLK 248; The Book of Concord 179; cf. WA 2, 749 = Am 35, 59; WA 8, 435; 8, 438; 30 I, 122; 38, 248 = Am 38, 209; V. Vajta, *Die Theologie des Gottesdienstes bei Luther*, Göttingen 2, 1954, 185 note 93.

were to be affirmed, both sides seriously accepting that there always remains a difference between the form and the content of a taught truth of the faith.<sup>10</sup> In this respect, indeed, the report on the Lutheran/Catholic dialogue in the USA arrives at making the following statement: "Our conversations have persuaded us of both the legitimacy and the limits of theological efforts to explore the mystery of Christ's presence in the sacrament. We are also persuaded that no single vocabulary or conceptual framework can be adequate, exclusive or final in this theological enterprise."<sup>11</sup>

Lutherans should not therefore regard the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation as a rationalistic attempt to explain the mystery of the presence of Christ in the sacrament, but rather understand this doctrine "as an emphatic affirmation of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament"<sup>12</sup>. Consequently, Lutherans should not persist in rejecting this teaching, even though they themselves may not affirm the doctrine and perhaps not even the concept of the "conversion".

Catholics, on the other hand, should recognize that a clear and unambiguous affirmation of the real presence of Christ — as is indeed given by the Lutheran side — can no longer form the subject of an *anathema sit*, and this not even when the concept of transubstantiation and the idea of a conversion of the elements is not accepted.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. Regarding the Duration of the Sacramental Presence of Christ

The Council of Trent condemns the understanding according to which the body and the blood of Jesus Christ are present *tantum in usu, dum sumitur, non ante vel post*<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Awareness of the insufficiency and inadequacy of human language in describing the eucharistic presence of Christ comes to the fore not only in the Lutheran renunciation of the attempt to define the manner of the real presence, but is expressed even in the Tridentine decree on the Eucharist. Indeed, this decree states that the sacramental presence of Christ is such "that we can hardly express it in words, although our reason illumined by faith enables us to recognize it as possible for God and therefore demands that we should steadfastly profess it" (DS 1636).

<sup>11</sup> USA III, II. 2c d, 196f.

<sup>12</sup> USA III, II.2c a, 195.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. DS 1652. "Transubstantiation" does not contradict "Konsubstantiation", "wenn letztere einfach sagen soll, dass Brot und Wein als physikalisch-chemische Größen unverändert weiter bestehen". J. Ratzinger, *ThQ* 147, 1967, 153.

<sup>14</sup> DS 1654.



But this condemnation does not apply to the Lutheran understanding: "There can hardly be any doubt that Luther recognized a real presence *ante* and *post sumpcionem*, that is to say, an effective duration of the real presence."<sup>15</sup> Even the statement *Nihil habet rationem sacramenti extra usum a Christo institutum*, or *extra actionem divinitus institutam*<sup>16</sup> to be found in the Lutheran confessional documents does not mean that the sacramental presence is limited to the reception of the elements. As is expressly said there, "'use' or 'action' does not primarily mean faith, or the oral eating alone, but the entire external and visible action of the Supper as ordained by Christ"<sup>17</sup>.

Catholics and Lutherans can therefore say in unison: "The true body and blood of Christ are present not only at the moment of reception but throughout the eucharistic action"<sup>18</sup>.

This justifies, and indeed demands, that during the liturgical action Lutherans, too, should adopt an attitude of respect vis-à-vis the consecrated elements as the carriers of the presence of Christ.<sup>19</sup> The report about the USA dialogue contains the following joint statement: "We are further agreed that as long as Christ remains sacramentally present, worship, reverence and adoration are appropriate"<sup>20</sup>.

However, a persisting divergence is represented by the problem of the reservation and adoration, after the eucharistic celebration, of the consecrated host which has not been distributed.

Although the Reformers called for an attitude of respect towards the residual consecrated elements,<sup>21</sup> they condemned the Catholic custom that

<sup>15</sup> H. Grass, *Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin*, 1954, 115.

<sup>16</sup> FC SD VII, 85, BSLK 1001; The Book of Concord 584; cf. Luther "... extra usum nihil sit sacramentum", Grass, 120.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> USA III, II, 1e, 193; Dombes I, No. 19, and Document of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, No. 34, seem to go even further when they say: "That which is given as the body and blood of Christ remains given as his body and blood; it must be treated as such".

<sup>19</sup> Luther did not eliminate the elevation and adoration of the elements which were connected with the words of institution; compare Grass, 115f. The Formula of Concord rejects an adoration of the "external visible elements", "the visible forms of the blessed bread and wine", but not of the Lord who is truly and essentially present in the Eucharist: FC Ep. VII, 40, BSLK 803; The Book of Concord 486; FC SD VII, 126, BSLK 1016; The Book of Concord 591.

<sup>20</sup> USA III, II, 2a c, 194.

<sup>21</sup> Luther, for example, makes the suggestion "reliquum sacramenti cum communicantibus ebibere et comedere" or that they should be burnt. Grass, 119; hosts which remain can also be given to the sick in the course of private eucharistic celebrations. Grass, 120; see also USA III, II, 2a e, 194.



required "the bread [to be] locked up in the tabernacle or [to be] carried about as a spectacle and for adoration",<sup>22</sup> because the Lord's Supper and the presence of Christ are wholly orientated towards reception.

It is true that even the Catholic side says that the use of the consecrated host for the communion of the sick, and not its adoration, is the "first and original purpose" of its reservation.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, however, one has to note "that adoration of the reserved sacrament has been very much a part of Catholic life and a meaningful form of devotion ... for many centuries"<sup>24</sup>.

However, the remaining difference between Catholic and Lutheran practice need not call into question retrospectively the common profession of Christ's real presence. This divergence is closely connected with the different understandings of the *modus praesentiae* and — like this latter — need not touch the "essence" of the real presence.

Seen from the Catholic side, moreover, the difference also loses some of its weight by virtue of the fact that, *inter alia*, the Council of Trent described the reservation of the host as a "custom" (*consuetudine*) and a "usage" (*mos*), although these should undoubtedly be retained and not be prohibited.<sup>25</sup>

Seen from the Lutheran side, on the other hand, it is of importance that the Catholic usage of the reservation of the undistributed host, as well as the adoration and processional practices associated therewith, should not obscure the nature of the Eucharist and, more particularly, its orientation towards the moment of communion. Fundamentally, the Roman Catholic Church nowadays seems to share this preoccupation; a case in point is represented by the *Instructio de cultu mysterii eucharistici* which, although it recommends the *devotio erga altaris Sacramentum etiam extra Missam*, goes on — in conformity with the Vatican II Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy<sup>26</sup> — to say: "Nevertheless these devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them"<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> FC SD VII, 108, BSLK 1010; cf. 1001; The Book of Concord 588; cf. 585.

<sup>23</sup> *Instructio de cultu mysterii eucharistici*, No. 49.

<sup>24</sup> USA III, II. 2a f, note 29, 194.

<sup>25</sup> DS 1645; cf. 1657.

<sup>26</sup> No. 13.

<sup>27</sup> *Instructio de cultu mysterii eucharistici*, No. 58. Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, No. 13.

## 2. Eucharist — Word — Proclamation

As in the past, Catholics and Lutherans today share the view that the word — i.e., the words of institution — has a central place in the Eucharist. "In the power of the Holy Spirit the bread and the wine become the body and blood of Christ through His creative word."<sup>1</sup> As the word of consecration the word constitutes the sacramental presence of Christ.

Vis-à-vis Catholic theology as accepted at that time, however, the Reformation stressed the fact that the words of institution should not be understood merely as words of consecration. They are at the same time words of promise addressed to the congregation granting them the gift of the Eucharist and thus through bodily food enabling them to receive in faith the spiritual food — namely the sacrament. Finally, they are words of proclamation announcing — as *summa et compendium evangelii*<sup>2</sup> — the entire salvific event. That is why the Reformers insisted on the practice of pronouncing the words of institution "distinctly" and "clearly", i.e., to the assembled congregation.<sup>3</sup> This resulted simultaneously in the demand for

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<sup>1</sup> See above, *The Eucharist*, No. 22. The Lutheran expression *virtute et potentia verborum*, FC SD VII, 75; BSLK 998; The Book of Concord 583 corresponds to the Catholic *ex vi verborum*. DS 1640; cf. USA III, II. 1c, 192; Dombes I, No. 19; Windsor, No. 10.

<sup>2</sup> WA 6, 525 = Am 36, 56; cf. WA 8, 447 etc.

<sup>3</sup> FC SD VII, 79-82, BSLK 999; The Book of Concord 584: "In the administration of Communion the words of institution are to be spoken or sung distinctly and clearly before the congregation and are under no circumstances to be omitted. Thereby we render obedience to the command of Christ, 'This do'. Thereby the faith of the hearers in the essence and benefits of this sacrament (the presence of the body and blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and all the benefits which Christ has won for us by his death and the shedding of his blood and which he gives to us in his testament) is awakened, strengthened, and confirmed through his Word. And thereby the elements of bread and wine are hallowed or blessed in this holy use, so that therewith the body and blood of Christ are distributed to us to eat and to drink, as Paul says, 'The cup of blessing which we bless', which happens precisely through the repetition and recitation of the words of institution."

the use of the vernacular and for a corresponding liturgical practice.<sup>4</sup> In addition to understanding the words of institution as words conveying a promise and a message the Reformers emphasize the essential need for preaching at the eucharistic service.<sup>5</sup> The Lutheran churches have followed this in their liturgical practice by making the sermon an essential part of their eucharistic services.

The consequent differences between the Lutheran and the Catholic concept and practice are being overcome more and more today by new developments:

Catholics see the Eucharist as a whole as having the character of proclamation;<sup>6</sup> the use of the vernacular is more strongly guaranteed and is widely practised;<sup>7</sup> stress is laid on the close connection between the proclamation of the word, or service of the word, and the celebration of the Eucharist, both forming a "single act of divine service" (*unum actum cultus*) and the fact is emphasized that "... the administration of the sacrament in the community of Christians calls for the proclamation of the word ... since the sacraments are mysteries of a faith that is derived from and nourished by preaching"<sup>8</sup>.

Lutherans nowadays realize and criticize the fact that in the past the Eucharist in the Reformation churches often appeared as a mere appendage to the service of the word and was only occasionally celebrated.

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<sup>4</sup> Luther, *Deutsche Messe und Ordnung Gottesdiensts* (1526).

<sup>5</sup> According to Luther, preaching is "the very thing that Jesus intended when he asked to be remembered", V. Vajta, *Die Theologie des Gottesdienstes bei Luther*, 1952, 152; see also 151-157; "... the Lord, when he instituted the mass, said 'Do this in remembrance of me' as if he were saying, 'As often as you use this sacrament and testament, you shall be preaching of me'", WA 6, 373 = Am 35, 105.

<sup>6</sup> See above, The Eucharist, No. 26. This proclamatory character of the Eucharist can be seen in the greater emphasis that is nowadays again being placed on the understanding of the Eucharist as a "memorial" or "*anamnesis*"; cf. Dombes I, No. 9: "Christ has instituted the eucharist as a memorial (*anamnesis*) of his whole life, and above all of his cross and resurrection ... The memorial is the effective proclamation by the Church of the great work of God." Commission on Faith and Order, No. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, No. 36: "But since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, may frequently be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended." See also Nos. 54 and 63.

<sup>8</sup> *Instructio de cultu mysterii eucharistici*, No. 10; cf. Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, No. 4.



Today, however, emphasis is placed on the unity of and the bond between preaching and Eucharist. The Lutheran orders, therefore — most of which were adopted after 1945 — make provision for the “full service” with preaching and Eucharist as the normal practice.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For example, Lutheran churches in the USA; Vereinigte Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands (Agenda für evangelisch-lutherische Kirchen und Gemeinden), First Volume (Edition for Pastors) 1955: “The complete form of the principal service is a divine service with sermon and holy Eucharist ... The holy Eucharist, too, ... should be publicly celebrated every Sunday, or at given regular intervals, in and with the entire congregation”, 41.



### 3. The Effectiveness of the Sacraments *sola fide* and *ex opere operato*

The Council of Trent regarded the Protestant doctrine of justification "through faith alone" as a rejection of the Catholic concept of the effectiveness of the sacraments *ex opere operato*.

Canon 8 of the *Canones de sacramentis in genere* states: "Anyone who says that grace is not transmitted *ex opere operato* by the sacraments of the new law themselves, but rather holds that mere faith in the divine promise is sufficient for the attainment of grace, shall be excluded" (DS 1606).

Although both justification "through faith alone" and the polemic against the *opus operatum* play an important part in the Lutheran confessional documents, neither the *sola fide* nor the polemic rejection of the *opus operatum* are directed against the doctrine of the effective transmission of grace through the sacraments. In Article IV of the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, the Lutherans defend themselves against the accusation that the *sola fide* is directed against the sacraments: "If they dislike the exclusive particle 'alone', let them remove the other exclusive terms from Paul, too, like 'freely', 'not of works', 'it is a gift', etc., for these terms are also exclusive. We exclude the claim of merit, not the Word or the sacraments, as our opponents slanderously claim. We said earlier that faith is conceived by the Word, and we give the highest praise to the ministry of the Word."<sup>1</sup> A document entitled "Antwort auf die Verleumdungen derer, die sich Katholisch nennen" (Answer to the defamations of those who call themselves Catholics), dated 4 September 1530, contains the following justification of the acceptance of the unity formula that had been worked out by the "Commission of the Fourteen" at the Augsburg Diet and which had said that remission of sins was granted instrumentally through word and sacrament:<sup>2</sup> "And these words were accepted by the Lutherans

<sup>1</sup> Ap VI, 73, BSLK 175, 11-18 Gt; cf. Lt: "Excludimus autem opinionem meriti. Non excludimus verbum aut sacramenta, ut calumniatur adversarii", 175, 3-6; The Book of Concord 117.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. V. Pfnür, *Einig in der Rechtfertigungslehre?* Wiesbaden 1970, 152, note 83; H. Immenkötter, *Um die Einheit im Glauben*, Münster 1973, 39, note 53.

because for them the word *sola* excludes neither grace nor the Word nor the sacraments, but only works”<sup>3</sup>.

## 1. Effectiveness of the Sacraments

According to the Augsburg Confession, the sacraments are “means”, “instruments” through which God effects, rouses, and strengthens faith and “dispenses his promises”<sup>4</sup>. They are effective, “efficacious even if the priests who administer them are wicked men”<sup>5</sup>. Melanchthon regards the sacraments as signs that bear witness to and confer salvation (*signa testificantia et applicantia*).<sup>6</sup> “They are report and transmission . . . and they both transmit and make present the salvation that has become a reality in Christ, they are instruments of God’s actions here and now, instruments in which he (Christ, the Spirit) is at work and through which he confers his salvation upon man. They are, therefore, *efficax ad salutem*.”<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1. Baptism

Even as late as 1525, Luther was still preaching that baptism without faith did not help anybody and was not to be administered to anybody who did not himself believe. This statement, as well as others in a similar vein, were used as reproaches against the Lutherans by J. Eck in the *404 Articles*, by J. Fabri in the *Antilogiarum Babylonia*, and by the *Responsio Catholica* at the Augsburg Diet in 1530.<sup>8</sup>

But these references by the Catholic side to earlier statements made by Luther did not do justice to the Lutheran position of 1530, since in the meantime both Luther and Melanchthon had reconsidered the question of

<sup>3</sup> Sch 254.

<sup>4</sup> CA V, BSLK 59, 4ff., Gt-Lt; The Book of Concord 31; CA XIII, BSLK 68, 6ff. 10f., Gt-Lt; The Book of Concord 35. In the English translation in the Book of Concord 35, last line the words *per sacramenta* of the Latin text, BSLK 68, 10, are omitted. Cf. Works of Melanchthon: MSA V 137, 28f. 268, 17-25.

<sup>5</sup> CA VIII, BSLK 62, 8ff., Gt-Lt; The Book of Concord 33; cf. Wittenberger Artikel of 1536: “Quod ad tertium decimum articulum confessionis nostrae attinet, docemus, quod sacramenta instituta sunt, non modo ut sint notae professionis inter Christianos, sed magis ut sint certa quaedam testimonia et *efficacia signa gratiae* et voluntatis Dei erga nos, hoc est, per quae Deus invisibiliter operetur in nobis et suam gratiam in nos invisibiliter diffundat”, *Die Wittenberger Artikel*, 1536, ed. by G. Mentz, Darmstadt 1968, 52, 24-54, 4.

<sup>6</sup> CR 24, 70; cf. K. Haendler, *Wort und Glaube bei Melanchthon*, Gütersloh 1968, 169, note 43.

<sup>7</sup> K. Haendler, op. cit. 167f.; cf. Ap IX, I “. . . baptismus puerorum . . . *efficax ad salutem*”, BSLK 247, 1f.; The Book of Concord 178.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. V. Pfnür, op. cit. 214, note 490.

the effectiveness of the sacraments in the course of the disputes with the Anabaptists, the Enthusiasts (*Schwärmer*), and Ulrich Zwingli. Thus, in his "Bedenken gegen die Wiedertäufer" (Objections to the Anabaptists), Melanchthon wrote in 1528: "Baptism bears witness to the fact that the remission of sins extends also to children, even though they do not yet understand the proclamation of the Word"<sup>9</sup>.

Against the Anabaptists at that time, Luther too professes the objective effect of the sacraments. He rejects rebaptism in the case where baptism has been received without faith: "It is a correct baptism in itself, and received rightly. For the words are spoken and everything that pertains to baptism is done as fully as when faith is present. If a thing is in itself correct you do not have to repeat it even though it was not correctly received. You remove what was wrong and all will be right without any repetition. *Abusus non tollit substantiam immo confirmat substantiam* (Abuse does not eliminate a substance, it rather confirms it). Abuse does not change the reality of a substance, indeed there can be no abuse without its reality."<sup>10</sup> In Luther's Large Catechism we read: "When the Word accompanies the water, Baptism is valid even though faith be lacking. For my faith does not constitute Baptism but receives it. Baptism does not become invalid even if it is wrongly received or used, for it is bound not to our faith but to the Word."<sup>11</sup>

## 1.2. Penance, Absolution

The Augsburg Confession and the Apology count penance among the sacraments in the stricter sense.<sup>12</sup> The reason for this is that Melanchthon

<sup>9</sup> MSA 1, 284, 20ff.

<sup>10</sup> WA 26, 159, 31-38, Am 40, 246; cf. 162, 9ff., 249: "The unchanging Word of God, once spoken in the first baptism, ever remains standing, so that afterwards they can come to faith in it, if they will, and the water with which they were baptized they can afterwards receive in faith, if they will. Even if they contradict the Word a hundred times, it still remains the Word spoken in the first baptism. Its power does not derive from the fact that it is repeated many times or is spoken anew, but from the fact that it was commanded once to be spoken." 164, 35ff., 252: "Here, namely, that we are baptized; not because we are certain of our faith but because it is the command and will of God. For even if I were never certain any more of faith, I still am certain of the command of God, that God has bidden to baptize, for this he has made known throughout the world. In this I cannot err, for God's command cannot deceive. But of my faith he has never said anything to anyone, nor issued an order or command concerning it." WA 26, 506, 13ff.

<sup>11</sup> BSLK 701, 39-47; The Book of Concord 443.

<sup>12</sup> Ap XIII, 4: "Vere igitur sunt sacramenta Baptismus, coena Domini, absolutio, quae est sacramentum poenitentiae", BSLK 292, 24ff. Cf. Ap XII, 41 & BSLK 259, 17ff. In the Augsburg Confession Article IX "Confession" and Article XII "Repentance" are arranged in order before Article XIII "The Use of Sacraments" and after the Articles IX "Baptism" and X "Lord's Supper".



draws the concept *materia* of the sacrament more widely than Luther and understands it as referring not only to the material thing, but to the entire symbolic action (*ceremonia, ritus, actio*).<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, Luther, Melanchthon, and the confessional documents agree in the interpretation of the effect of absolution. Their statements have to be evaluated against the background of the late scholastic doctrine of penance.<sup>14</sup> In contrast with Gabriel Biel, who in the question of the effectiveness of absolution refers to the early scholastic contritionism of Peter Lombard and attributes a merely declarative function to absolution, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, and the Luther of 1529/1530 stress the "power" (*vis*) of absolution and see it as the centrepiece, the very thing that turns penance into a sacrament: "At the same time the people are carefully instructed concerning the consolation of the Word of absolution so that they may esteem absolution as a great and precious thing. It is not the voice or word of the man who speaks it, but it is the Word of God, who forgives sin, for it is spoken in God's stead and by God's command."<sup>15</sup> "The power of the keys administers and offers the Gospel through absolution, which is the true voice of the Gospel. In speaking of faith, therefore, we also include absolution since 'faith comes from what is heard' ... Because God truly quickens through the Word, the keys truly forgive sin before him, according to the statement (Luke 10:16), 'He who hears you, hears me.' Therefore we must believe the voice of the one absolving no less than we would believe a voice coming from heaven. Absolution may properly be called the sacrament of penitence, as even the more learned of the scholastics say."<sup>16</sup> In the Small Catechism Luther affirms "that we receive absolution or forgiveness from the confessor as from God himself, by no means doubting but firmly believing that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven"<sup>17</sup>. In his pamphlet *Von den Schlüsseln* (On the Keys), August 1530, Luther writes, "We speak about what the keys do and give. He who does not accept has nothing indeed; but the keys do not therefore fail. Many do not believe the gospel, but the gospel does not therefore fail and disavow them. A king gives you a castle. If you do not accept, the king has not therefore lied or failed; you have deceived yourself. It is your fault. The king certainly has given it."<sup>18</sup> "But do you think that he would not be bound (in sin) who does not

<sup>13</sup> Cf. H. Fagerberg, *Die Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften von 1527-1537*, Göttingen 1965, 170.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. V. Pfnür, op. cit. 77-82, 216-219. Also Luther had this opinion till about 1517; cf. WA 5, 125, 23ff.

<sup>15</sup> CA XXV, 2-4, BSLK 97, 37-98, 7; The Book of Concord 61f.; cf. Smalcald Articles III, 3, 20, BSLK 441, 28f.; WA 30 II 287, 27ff; 444; 453f.; 468.

<sup>16</sup> BSLK 259, 5-20; Ap XII, 39ff.; The Book of Concord 187.

<sup>17</sup> BSLK 517, 13-17; The Book of Concord 349f.

<sup>18</sup> WA 30 II 499, 2-8; cf. Am 40, 367.



believe the binding-key? He shall experience in time that the binding was not idle and did not fail because of his unbelief. Likewise, he who does not believe that he is absolved and that his sin is forgiven should also, in time, experience how his sin most certainly has been forgiven and how he has not been willing to believe it."<sup>19</sup>

### 1.3. The Eucharist

In his confession for the Augsburg Diet, Zwingli gives the following formulation: "I believe that the body of Christ is truly present in the holy Supper of the Eucharist, i.e., the thanksgiving, namely through the eyes of faith"<sup>20</sup>.

Melanchthon comments on this in a review of 25 July 1530: "They butter the people up by saying that the body is truly present, but they then add 'in the eyes of faith' which means, through one's own imagination. And thus they again deny the real presence"<sup>21</sup>. In his "Confession About Christ's Supper" Luther writes: "Likewise I speak and confess the sacrament of the altar . . . It is not on man's faith or unbelief, but on God's Word and institution"<sup>22</sup>. And the Smalcald Articles (III, VI, 1) state: "We hold that the bread and the wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ and that these are given and received not only by godly but also by wicked Christians"<sup>23</sup>.

Summarizing, one can therefore say: What Catholic doctrine expresses by the statement about the effectiveness of the sacraments *ex opere operato* is in its essence also a Lutheran doctrine: God's offer of grace does not stand or fall with the faith or the unbelief of man. The effectiveness of the sacraments does not depend on the worthiness of the minister.

## 2. The Polemic Against the *opus operatum*

If the Lutheran confessional documents nevertheless engage in polemics against the expression *ex opere operato*, one has to see this against a two-fold background:

2.1. *Opus operatum* in the context of the doctrine of the sacraments, explained according to Gabriel Biel and attributed to Duns Scotus.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 498, 34-40; cf. Am 40, 366f.; cf. WA 1, 543, 14f., 22ff. = DS 1460.

<sup>20</sup> Zwingli, Fidei ratio. Art. 8: E. F. K. Müller, *Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformierten Kirche*, Leipzig 1903, 87, 43f.

<sup>21</sup> CR II 223.

<sup>22</sup> WA 26, 506, 13-25; cf. Am 37, 367.

<sup>23</sup> BSLK 450, 13-451, 2; The Book of Concord 311.

In Article XIII, 18 of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession is condemned "the whole crowd of scholastic doctors who teach that unless there is some obstacle, the sacraments confer grace *ex opere operato*, without a good disposition in the one using them"<sup>24</sup>. The first sentence of the bull *Exsurge Domine* of 15 June 1520 quotes Luther's error taken from the seventh conclusion of the *Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute* (1518)<sup>25</sup>: "It is an heretical but usual opinion which says that the sacraments of the new law give justifying grace to those who place no obstacle in the way"<sup>26</sup>. In the *Assertio*, where he confirms all the articles condemned in the bull issued by Leo X, Luther names Duns Scotus as the originator of this "heretical view",<sup>27</sup> and then characterizes it with the following words: "As *obex* (obstacle) they regard mortal sin or the intention to commit one, such as murder, dissoluteness or the like, so that the person receiving the sacrament needs to do no more than stop sinning, or abandon the intention to commit the sin, even though he doesn't resolve any good intentions. Indeed, some of them say that not even a good motion of the heart is needed."<sup>28</sup>

In the Apology the expression *ex opere operato* is complemented in a stereotypical manner by the additions *sine bono motu accipientis, sine bono motu cordis, sine bono motu utentis, hoc est sine fide in Christum* (without the proper attitude of the recipient, without a good disposition of the heart, without a good disposition in the one using them, i.e., without faith in Christ).<sup>29</sup>

The background of this polemic of the Reformers against the *opus operatum* is constituted by the Scotist teachings about the sacraments as seen through the spectacles of Gabriel Biel, teachings that are of importance in the history of dogma mainly in connection with the doctrine of penance.<sup>30</sup> We need not decide here whether this view does justice to the

<sup>24</sup> BSLK 295, 1-4; cf. the condemnation added in the Editio princeps, BSLK 68 and the Ed. Variata, MSA VI, 21, 23-28, of Article XIII of the Augsburg Confession; The Book of Concord 213.

<sup>25</sup> WA 1, 544, 35ff.; cf. Am 31, 106f.

<sup>26</sup> DS 1451.

<sup>27</sup> WA 7, 102, 17f.; cf. WA 1, 286, 20ff.

<sup>28</sup> WA 7, 102, 21-25; cf. Altenstaig, *Vocabularius theologie* 1517: term *Opus operatum*.

<sup>29</sup> Ap IV, 63, BSLK 172, 52f.; The Book of Concord 115; Ap XIII, 18, BSLK 295, 4f., 7f., 50f.; The Book of Concord 213, 214; Ap VII, 21, BSLK 238, 48; The Book of Concord 172; Ap XII, 12, BSLK 255, 12; The Book of Concord 184; Ap XII, 25, BSLK 256, 37; The Book of Concord 185; Ap XII, 162, BSLK 287, 36ff.; The Book of Concord 208; Ap XXIV, 26, BSLK 356, 29ff.; The Book of Concord 254; Ap XXIV, 89, BSLK 374, 6ff.; The Book of Concord 266.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. V. Pfnür, op. cit., 64, note 359.

Scotist doctrine of the sacraments. But for the purposes of understanding the polemics of the Reformers against the *ex opere operato* it is important to see not only the underlying understanding of the *opus operatum*, but also the positive concept that the Reformers posit over against it, i.e., the statement that the divine promise and faith belong together.

2.2. *Opus operatum* in connection with the doctrine of merit, especially the doctrine of the effectiveness of works and supplications for the dead (*suffragia*) and the treatment of the question of satisfaction (*satisfactio*).

The expression *opus operatum* is found in the Augsburg Confession and the Apology in connection with the four traditional works into which the *suffragia* are subdivided. The documents talk about the mass, prayer, fasting, and alms as *satisfactiones ex opere operato*. This usage cannot be understood if one refers the term *opus operatum* to the doctrine of the sacraments only. Thus, Article XII of the Apology makes the following statement in connection with the discussion of satisfaction as the third part of penance: As the opponents teach, "a fixed number of prayers or certain acts of charity are performed as acts of worship which *ex opere operato* pay homage to God and compensate for eternal death. They attribute satisfaction to the mere performance of these acts, for they teach that they avail even for those in mortal sin."<sup>31</sup> In regard to the question of the stipendiary use of the Mass *ex opere operato* also, one must once again bear in mind the position that was opposed by Luther and Melanchthon, and that constituted the background of the polemic.<sup>32</sup>

"The Reformers, therefore, fought against a concept of the *opus operatum* that was determined partly by its use in the doctrine of the *suffragia* and partly by the Scotist doctrine of the sacraments. If one furthermore combines these two aspects,<sup>33</sup> it is not by any means surprising to see that in the polemics of the Reformation the *opus operatum* understood in this manner becomes the counterconcept of justification through faith."<sup>34</sup>

If one bears in mind this background of the polemic, and also the positive statements (made by the Reformers) about the effectiveness of the sacraments, one finds, in my opinion, that there is a consensus between the Catholic and Lutheran concepts regarding this question.

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<sup>31</sup> Ap XII, 143, BSLK 283, 19ff. Gt = 282, 56ff. Lt; The Book of Concord 204; Ap IV, 276-278, BSLK 215, 6.19; The Book of Concord 148.149; Ap XII, 162, BSLK 287, 36ff.; The Book of Concord 208; Ap XXIV, 25, BSLK 356, 29ff.; The Book of Concord 253f.; Ap XXIV, 89, BSLK 374, 6ff.; The Book of Concord 266. WA 40 I 219, 3ff.; MSA V 293, 25-28. Cf. V. Pfnür, op. cit., 47ff. 40f. 43f.

<sup>32</sup> See below, The Mass as Sacrifice for Atonement.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Ap XXIV, 63, BSLK 367, 24-30; The Book of Concord 260f.; see below, The Mass as Sacrifice for Atonement.

<sup>34</sup> V. Pfnür, op. cit., 64.



## 4. The Mass as Sacrifice for Atonement for the Living and the Dead *ex opere operato*

In the USA dialogue Catholics and Lutherans expressed the joint conviction that Christ's unique sacrifice on the cross is sacramentally present in the Eucharist and that the congregation participates in Christ's sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> But the question of the Mass as atonement for the living and the dead was not clarified. Augsburg Confession (CA) XXIV condemns the widely held view that the Mass is a work that annuls *ex opere operato* the sins of the living and the dead.<sup>2</sup>

For the purpose of clarifying this controversial question it is of decisive importance to understand the background of the Reformation polemics. According to CA XXIV, the condemned doctrine of the Mass as atonement for the living and the dead has its origin in the view (*opinio*) "that Christ had by his passion made satisfaction for original sin and had instituted the Mass in which an oblation should be made for daily sins, mortal and venial"<sup>3</sup>. Out of the opinion that the Mass is an atonement "followed a debate as to whether one Mass held for many people merited as much as a special Mass held for an individual. Out of this grew the countless multiplication of Masses, by the performance of which men expected to get everything they needed from God. Meanwhile faith in Christ and true service of God were forgotten"<sup>4</sup>.

The central point of the controversy is not the word "sacrifice" which Melancthon purposely avoided in the Augsburg Confession in view of the ambiguity of the concept,<sup>5</sup> but rather the concept of the Mass as a

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<sup>1</sup> USA III with reference, e.g. to WA 6, 370, 3ff.

<sup>2</sup> BSLK 93, 11ff.; cf. Ap XXIV: BSLK 367, 18-33; CA, Ed. Variata 24: MSA VI, 40, 12-33.

<sup>3</sup> BSLK 93, 5-10. The Book of Concord 58; cf. W. Massa, *Die Eucharistiepredigt am Vorabend der Reformation*, Steyl 1966, 98-100; V. Pfnür, *Einig in der Rechtfertigungslehre?* Wiesbaden 1970, 56f.

<sup>4</sup> BSLK 93, 13-22; The Book of Concord 58.

<sup>5</sup> BSLK 353, 12ff.; cf. 360, 21-26: "nos quidem facile patimur missam intelligi iuge sacrificium modo ut tota missa intelligatur, hoc est, ceremonia cum praedicatione evangelii, fide, invocatione et gratiarum actione". The Book of Concord 251.



work *ex opere operato*, a concept that, the Reformers claim,<sup>6</sup> could not be found in the writings of the church fathers<sup>7</sup>. In this connection the Apology refers to Gabriel Biel: "But our opponents claim that the Mass is a work that justifies *ex opere operato* and removes the burden of guilt and punishment in those for whom it is offered, as Gabriel Biel writes"<sup>8</sup>. According to Biel, whose explanation of the Mass is also referred to by the *Theologisches Lexikon* published by J. Altenstaig in 1517 in the entries "missa", "opus operatum" and "suffragium", the Mass has an *ex opere operato* effect in two ways:

1. By virtue of its divine institution. From this point of view the value of the Mass, in contrast with the sacrifice on the cross, is in itself finite *ex opere operato* (and not by reason of the disposition of the actual participants).

2. With a view to the offering of the sacrifice: From this point of view "the individual mass has an intrinsic value *ex opere operato* even when all those who actually participate in this individual mass are evil, and this in view of the merits and the sacrificial spirit of the Church that offers this mass to God as its gift" and in whose name the priest offers the sacrifice. "In this respect the value *ex opere operato* is sometimes greater and sometimes smaller, depending on whether the merits and the sacrificial spirit of the individual members that make up the Church are greater or smaller."<sup>9</sup>

Biel was not the only one to hold this view (at the time of the Reformation this position was not shared by Silvester Prierias, among others, and nowadays is generally rejected by Catholic theology): "The discussion about

<sup>6</sup> BSLK 368, 39-41; 368, 17-22; 375, 47; 376, 6f.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. BSLK 351, 35-39; 352, 13-21 (*opus nostrum ex opere operato*); 352, 36-353, 2; 360, 5f.; 360, 33-37: "quod ceremonia sit opus ex opere operato iustificans aut applicandum pro aliis, ut mereatur eis remissionem peccatorum etc."; 359, 5f. (*ceremonia ex opere operato*); 359, 11-13 (*sola ceremonia, ceremonia ex opere operato*); 350, 14-34; 362, 3-7; 368, 40 (*meritum operis operati*); 374, 6f.; 374, 34 and 375, 13-15 (*satisfactio ex opere operato*); 376, 25 (*sacrificia ex opere operato*).

<sup>8</sup> BSLK 200, 33-37; cf. l.c. 321, 14f. The Book of Concord 136; cf. V. Pfnür, op. cit., 34.

<sup>9</sup> V. Pfnür, op. cit., 51-55. Something that contentually corresponds to this concept of *opus operatum* can be found, for example, in the problem regarding the meaning of the canonical hours. According to the *Summa angelica*, indeed, the canonical hours have their value even when they are pronounced by an inattentive priest and one who is in a state of mortal sin, i.e., when they are given a mere pro forma recital, "because the evil of the servant (the priest) does not harm the good work of the actor (the Church)". Somewhat similarly, a particular current of scholastic thought considers that the attainment of an indulgence for a deceased does not (necessarily) require that the person who acts on behalf of the deceased and performs the exterior work in his stead should be in a state of grace. Cf. V. Pfnür, op. cit., 49f.

the value and the effect of mass pervades the whole of the Middle Ages. The view that the effectiveness of mass is already limited in itself, and not just by the disposition of those who participate in it, began to assert itself increasingly in late medieval times."<sup>10</sup> A proper understanding of the polemics of the Reformation requires one not only to be familiar with this view — held by leading scholastic theologians — of the in itself, i.e. *ex opere operato*, limited and finite value of Mass, but also with the views about the effectiveness of Mass found in the preaching<sup>11</sup> and pious literature of the times and held in popular belief and, further, with the effects of these views on the practice of religious life. See, for example, the sure effect, *ex opere operato*, that was attributed to certain Mass formulae and Mass series,<sup>12</sup> or the institution of the altarists or beneficed, priests who obtained their livelihood from donations and who had the task of celebrating Mass on certain days on behalf of the donors.<sup>13</sup> As regards the question of the application of Mass, one has to bear in mind the then widely held idea that certain Masses had an unfailing effect, particularly for the "redemption", the "liberation" of the souls in purgatory.<sup>14</sup>

When Melancthon speaks of the application to the unjust who do not put up any *obex*,<sup>15</sup> he really combines the aforementioned Scotist understanding of the effectiveness of the sacraments *ex opere operato* with the concept of the offering of Mass *ex opere operato*, which latter has to be seen in connection with the doctrine of the *suffragia*.<sup>16</sup> One has to take

<sup>10</sup> E. Iserloh, "Der Wert der Messe in der Diskussion der Theologen vom Mittelalter bis zum 16. Jahrhundert", *ZkTh* 83, 1961, 79; cf. E. Iserloh, *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Bd. I, Berlin, New York, 101.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. W. Massa l.c.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Dionysius Cartusianus: "Quidam ex ficta devotione dicunt, quod quicumque legerint tot aut tot Missas, quas vocant aureas, pro certa anima in purgatorio existente, certitudinaliter redimet ea, attribuentes illi numero Missarum aut certis orationibus quodammodo ex opere operato talem ac tantam virtutem incurrentes per hoc superstitionis peccatum". See V. Pfnür, op. cit., 61; cf. A. Franz, *Die Messe im deutschen Mittelalter*, Freiburg 1902, 218-219.

<sup>13</sup> "In Münster there were in 1421, in addition to the cathedral altarists themselves, some 77 such beneficed." H. Schroer, *Die Kirche in Westfalen vor der Reformation*, Münster 1967, I. 169.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. BSLK 352, 44-46, "Volunt impetare, quidquid in omni vita opus est; volunt etiam mortuos liberare"; 367, 44-368, 4; 373, 36-39; 420, 22f.; cf. "Gülden Mess", WA 30 II, 297, 28ff.; BSLK 75, 26. "Funff messen", WA 30 II, 611, 15ff., "When these five masses are piously celebrated for a departed soul, this latter is thereby redeemed, and this even though it may have to remain in purgatory until the day of judgement." A. Franz, l.c. 262; cf. 250.

<sup>15</sup> BSLK 367, 27f.: "... applicata pro aliis etiam iniustis, non ponentibus obicem, mereatur eis remissionem peccatorum, culpae et poenae"; 376, 17-19.

<sup>16</sup> See above. Section on "The Effectiveness of the Sacraments".



account of this background before one can correctly appreciate the struggle of the CA and the Apology against the Mass as work, *satisfactio, sacrificium, ceremonia ex opere operato*. On the other hand, the polemics of the Reformers and particularly those of Luther, do not do justice to the Catholic side, because they identify the views they oppose with the Catholic position in general and do not take into account, or simply put aside, the more differentiated statements of Catholic theologians.<sup>17</sup> Luther's words regarding the horror of the Mass<sup>18</sup> are no longer appropriate in the situation following the liturgical reform of the Vatican II Council.

Contentually, then, there now is a convergence inasmuch as the *Catholic side*, vis-à-vis a ritualistic exteriorization and the concept of Mass as a work *ex opere operato* outlined above, stresses the importance of the participation in faith of the whole of the celebrating congregation and, further, inasmuch as vis-à-vis the concept of the *ex opere operato* finite value of the Mass in contrast with the sacrifice of the cross, the same side teaches the unity of Mass and sacrifice of the cross (the Mass as a means of making present the sacrifice of the cross), while the popular view of the unfailing effect of certain forms of Mass and Mass series for the redemption of a soul was already corrected by the Council of Trent;<sup>19</sup> on the other side there is convergence inasmuch as the *Lutheran side*, vis-à-vis an individualistic understanding of the Lord's Supper as a granting of the remission of the sins of an individual, places greater emphasis on the community of the body of Christ<sup>20</sup> and does not reject the possibility of a supplication for the dead.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Cf. e.g. Silvester Prierias, Schatzgeyer et al.; cf. Luther's remark on the term *sacrificium mystericale*, WA Tr 2, No. 1320.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. WA 15, 774, 19-21: "And I say that all brothels, though God has strictly forbidden them, and even all manslaughter, theft, murder and adultery are not so noxious as this horror of the popish mass". Cf. Smalcald Articles II, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Concilium Tridentinum, Decretum de observandis et vitandis in celebratione missarum: "Quarundam vero missarum et candelarum certum numerum, qui magis a superstitioso cultu quam a vera religione inventus est, omnino ab ecclesia removeant". *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta*, ed. J. Alberigo etc., Bologna 1972, 737, 15-17.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. WA 2, 743, 20-244, 7.

<sup>21</sup> BSLK 375, 45f.; cf. USA III, I. 2c; 376, 1-12. *Evangelischer Erwachsenenkatechismus*, Gütersloh 1975, 539: "The community of the faithful, the Church, is not destroyed by death. Just as in life, the Christian depends on the community also in death. In its prayers the community intercedes with God in favour of the deceased, supplicating forgiveness for his sins, acceptance by God, and the granting of eternal life. If there are some communities where the dead receive the benediction at the moment of being buried, then this is only a logical expression of this link extending beyond death. The benediction at the grave is an enhancement of the supplication for the deceased."



The fact that such a supplication for the dead is pronounced on the occasion of the Eucharist, and therefore in the presence of the Lord who intercedes for us with the Father, should no longer represent a point of contrast capable of separating Lutherans and Catholics.

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## 5. The Eucharist as a Communal Meal

### The Problem of Private Masses And of Withholding the Chalice

The Lutheran Confessions emphasize — in accordance with the command given in the words of institution — that the Eucharist is oriented towards reception, and more precisely towards reception within the communion of the congregation.<sup>1</sup> They see in "private Masses" a custom that is not in accord with the words of institution or the eucharistic practice of the early church and is unknown in the Orthodox churches.<sup>2</sup>

According to Catholic doctrine the Eucharist is oriented towards reception also.<sup>3</sup> Today, moreover, strong emphasis is placed on the communal character of the Eucharist.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless the practice of private Masses is continued and, for now, recommended.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CA XXIV, 34, BSLK 94f.; The Book of Concord 60: "Inasmuch, then, as the Mass is not a sacrifice to remove the sins of others, whether living or dead, but should be a Communion in which the priest and others receive the sacrament for themselves, it is observed among us in the following manner: On holy days, and at other times when communicants are present, Mass is held and those who desire it are communicated."

<sup>2</sup> Ap XXIV, 6-8, BSLK 350f.; The Book of Concorde 250 and SA II, 2, BSLK 350f.; The Book of Concord 294; for Luther, cf. Vajta, *Die Theologie des Gottesdienstes bei Luther*, 1952, 87ff.

<sup>3</sup> "... quod (sacramentum) fuerit a Christo Domino, ut sumatur (cf. Mt. 26 : 26ff.), institutum;" DS 1643. In the "Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine" of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (Windsor Statement), we read: "The Lord's words at the last supper, 'Take and eat; this is my body', do not allow us to dissociate the gift of the presence and the act of sacramental eating. The elements are not mere signs; Christ's body and blood become really present and are really given. But they are really present and given in order that, receiving them, believers may be united in communion with Christ the Lord" (No. 9).

<sup>4</sup> Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, "Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the 'sacrament of unity' . . . Whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, this way of celebrating them is to be preferred, as far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and quasi-private. This rule applies with special force to the celebration

In the Catholic view this practice is not contrary to the concept of the Eucharist as a communal meal because "every Mass has of itself a public and a social nature"<sup>6</sup> and is an act of the church.<sup>7</sup> The celebration of the Eucharist includes the communicants "at all times and in all places". "Even the limits of earthly reality are transcended in that the Holy Spirit also unites us with those who have gone before in faith and been called to eternal communion in God."<sup>8</sup> Although Lutherans can agree with this all-embracing communal character of the Eucharist, in their view it does not justify the practice of "private Masses".

In fact the decisive idea in this Catholic practice is that "every Mass that is celebrated is offered, not just for the salvation of a few, but for the salvation of the whole world"<sup>9</sup>. There is clearly a close connection between this idea and the view formulated by the Council of Trent,<sup>10</sup> already held at the time of the early fathers, but rejected by Lutherans,<sup>11</sup> that the sacrifice of the Mass is performed, not only for the assembled communicants, but also for others — both "living and dead". Even if this concept could be interpreted by Lutherans as intercession for the absent living and the dead, and perhaps accepted in this sense, this would not mean that Lutherans approve of "private Masses".

Consequently a divergence remains between Catholic and Lutheran concept and practice, in spite of the basic convictions which they share.

In connection with the concept of the Eucharist as a communal meal the question arises of distributing and receiving the sacrament under both kinds (i.e. both bread and wine).

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of Mass and the administration of the sacraments, even though every Mass has of itself a public and a social nature" (Nos. 26 and 27).

<sup>5</sup> Vatican II, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, "Priests fulfill their chief duty in the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In it the work of our redemption continues to be carried out. For this reason, priests are strongly urged to celebrate Mass every day, for even if the faithful are unable to be present, it is an act of Christ and the Church" (No. 13). See also *Instructio de cultu mysterii eucharistici*, No. 44.

<sup>6</sup> See note 4 above.

<sup>7</sup> See note 5 above.

<sup>8</sup> See above *The Eucharist*, No. 27.

<sup>9</sup> Encycl. "Mysterium fidei" of 3rd September, 1965, AAS 57, 1965, 761; cf. *Instructio de cultu mysterii eucharistici*, No. 44: "... in quo (sc. actu) sacerdos semper agit pro salute populi".

<sup>10</sup> DS 1753.

<sup>11</sup> See note 1 above.



The Lutheran Confessions insist on the cup for the laity<sup>12</sup> and condemn withholding the chalice from the laity as an abuse<sup>13</sup> because of Christ's own command and his words of institution, and not because they deny that Christ is fully present in each of the two kinds. In insisting on the lay chalice, therefore, Lutherans are concerned with the perfection and completeness of the sacramental symbol in accordance with its institution.<sup>14</sup>

Catholics today — while retaining the doctrinal decisions of the Council of Trent, especially the doctrine of the presence of the whole Christ under both kinds<sup>15</sup> — insist that the sacramental sign is more perfect and more complete in Communion under both forms than it is under one form only.<sup>16</sup> For this reason the offering of the chalice to lay persons has recently been officially permitted in a number of special cases.<sup>17</sup>

On the question of receiving the Eucharist under both kinds, therefore (the problem of the lay chalice), differences still exist between the concept and practice of Catholics and Lutherans. However, they are no longer completely opposed.

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<sup>12</sup> CA XXII; Ap XXII.

<sup>13</sup> FC Ep. VII, 24, BSLK 801; The Book of Concord 484; FC SD VII, 110, BSLK 1010f.; The Book of Concord 588f.

<sup>14</sup> The Smalcald Articles contain the following passage: "We need not resort to the specious learning of the sophists and the Council of Constance that as much is included under one form as under both. Even if it were true that as much is included under one form as under both, yet administration in one form is not the whole order and institution as it was established and commanded by Christ" (Part III, Art. VI, 2 and 3; BSLK 451; The Book of Concord 311). At Worms, when he was asked to disapprove the phrase "Sub altera tamen specie non esse integrum neque legitimum sacramentum", Luther answered: "Hoc dixi de speciebus, non de re contenta in sacramento. Nam in una specie totum Christum accipi dixi. Sed non plenum sacramentum, id est, non utramque speciem!" WA 7, 608; see H. Grass, *Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin*, 1954, 48ff. and 55f.

<sup>15</sup> DS 1726-1729.

<sup>16</sup> "Formam ratione signi plenior habet sacra communio cum fit utraque specie. In ea enim forma . . . signum eucharistici convivii perfectius elucet . . ."; *Instructio de cultu mysterii eucharistici*, No. 32.

<sup>17</sup> *Instructio de cultu mysterii eucharistici*, I.c.

## 6. The Eucharist — A Meal for Sinners?

According to J. A. Jungmann, "in the two thousand years of the Church's history we see two viewpoints, the most opposite imaginable enjoying the field: on the one hand, the undiscerning confidence that he who by Baptism was implanted in Christ and accepted into the Kingdom of God should also be allowed to regard the bread of heaven as his daily food; on the other hand, that feeling of reserve and timidity that looked more to human weakness than to the grace-made dignity of the Christian, and which hindered even the pious from approaching the holy mystery frequently"<sup>1</sup>.

On the one hand there is the reference to 1 Cor. 11:27ff.: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself."

"If it is unseemly to participate in any kind of sacred act when one is not holy, then, the more the sacredness and divinity of this heavenly sacrament is certain for a Christian, the more he must examine his conscience very closely so as to ensure that he does not come forward to receive Communion without great reverence and holiness. For the words of the Apostle are filled with sacred awe: 'Any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself'."<sup>2</sup> In the liturgy of the eastern churches this attitude of piety is expressed in the call before Communion: "Holy things for the holy"<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, vol. II, 365-366, New York et al., Benziger Brothers, 1955.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Trent, Decree on the Holy Eucharist, c. 7: DS 1646. Cf. Origen, In Psalm 37 hom. 2, 6: PG 12, 1386 D; Athanasius, Epistole heortastike 5.5 PG 26, 1382f.; Chrysostome, Hom. on 1 Cor. 28:1.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Const. Ap. VIII 13, 12; Cyrill of Jerusalem, Cat. myst. V, 19; cf. Didache X, 6.

On the other hand there is the reference to Zacchaeus (Luke 19 : 1-10) who "received the Lord joyfully" in his house.<sup>4</sup> There is the prayer for daily bread in the Lord's Prayer.<sup>5</sup> There is the teaching that we are never free from sin, so that we are always in need of the Eucharist as a means of salvation. "We must not abstain from Communion because we recognize that we are sinners. On the contrary, we must hasten to receive it as a means of healing the soul and purifying the spirit, but in humility of mind and the faith that we who are unworthy to receive this great grace, pray for it as a means of healing our sins. Otherwise even a yearly Communion cannot be received worthily, as some do in the monasteries who esteem the worth, the holiness and the sublimity of the heavenly sacraments so much that they think only saints and sinless persons ought to receive them instead of believing that, through our participation, these sacraments sanctify and purify us. These persons indeed fall into a greater arrogance which they think they avoid, because they consider themselves worthy of receiving the heavenly Sacraments. But realizing that, in this humility of heart with which we believe and confess, we can never attain to these sacred mysteries on the basis of our own merit, it is much truer to receive these Sacraments on Sundays as means of healing our own weaknesses, rather than to presume in the vanity of our hearts to consider ourselves worthy to participate in them."<sup>6</sup>

What actually happened during the Middle Ages was that the Eucharist came to be regarded more and more as the *mysterium tremendum*.<sup>7</sup> "The laity went once, the very pious twice to four times a year, the clergy once a month or even once a week."<sup>8</sup> Within the monastic Orders "the lay brothers and lay sisters were not permitted to take Communion as often as the clergy and the choir-sisters. It would have been considered presumptuous if they had aspired to equality"<sup>9</sup>.

It is against this background of the medieval attitude to the Eucharist (although a certain change had already occurred in the late Middle Ages) that Luther's statements are to be considered. According to Luther's sermons on the Sacrament (1518-1523) the right preparation for Communion is faith (i.e. trust) in God's gift of grace, and not striving to attain personal merit. "Worthy reception of the Sacrament, however, is not based on our

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Augustine, Ep. ad Jan. 54 c. 4: CSEL 34, 162.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Cyprian of Carthage, De dominica oratione c. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Joh. Cassian, Collationes patrum 23 c. 21.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. J. A. Jungmann, op. cit., 450.

<sup>8</sup> P. Browe, *Die häufige Kommunion im Mittelalter*, Münster 1938, 162.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 145f.



diligence and effort, our work and prayers, or our fasting, but on the truth of the divine words."<sup>10</sup>

Luther however, sometimes exaggerates in formulating his concern: "the best preparation is when you are worst prepared"<sup>11</sup>. "Let someone else pray, fast, go to confession, prepare himself for mass and the sacrament as he chooses. You do the same, but remember that this is all pure foolishness and self-deception, if you do not set before you the words of the testament and arouse yourself to believe and desire them."<sup>12</sup>

"Greatly mistaken are those who approach the Eucharist by making confession, so that they feel free from any mortal sin, and by making prayers and preparations beforehand — they all eat and drink damnation. But if they believe and trust that they will obtain grace, then they are made pure and worthy by this grace alone."<sup>13</sup> In the Bull "Exsurge Domine" (1520), this phrase of Luther's is included among the Articles which are described as "heretical or objectionable or false or which are a stumbling-block for pious ears or misleading for simple minds"<sup>14</sup>.

In Canon 11 of the Decree on the Holy Eucharist, the Council of Trent made the following formulation: "Anyone who says that faith alone is an adequate preparation for the benefit of the Sacrament of the most sacred Eucharist shall be excluded. In order to ensure that this sublime Sacrament shall not be received unworthily and thus lead to death and damnation, this holy assembly of the Church decrees and declares that those persons whose conscience accuses them of a serious sin (however much they may think they repent of it) must make confession before taking the Sacrament, if they can find a confessor. Anyone who presumes to teach, or preach the contrary, obstinately to maintain it or defend it in public disputation, shall be excluded without more ado."<sup>15</sup>

In order to arrive at a fair judgment on these opposing positions, one must examine the different intention behind each of them. Luther opposes

<sup>10</sup> Luther, Sermon on the Worthy Reception of the Sacrament (Maundy Thursday 1521), WA 7, 695, 10ff.; Am 42, 174, quoted by Cochlaeus in Articles CCCCC, art. 172; cf. art. 173: WA 7, 696, 9-16.

<sup>11</sup> Luther, Sermo de digna praeparatione (1518): "Optima dispositio est non nisi ea, qua pessime es dispositus". WA 1, 330, 24f.; cf. *ibid.* 331, 19ff.

<sup>12</sup> Luther, Treatise on the New Testament that is, the Holy Mass. WA 6, 360, 32-361, 3; Am 35, 88; cf. *ibid.* WA 6, 526, 24f. quoted by J. Eck, articuli 404, art. 247; WA 8, 433, 39ff. = WA 8, 508, 32ff. quoted by J. Eck, articuli 404, art. 246.

<sup>13</sup> Luther, Sermo de digna praeparatione. WA 1, 330, 36ff.; cf. Luther, Instructio pro confessione peccatorum (1518). WA 1, 264, 9-15.

<sup>14</sup> DS 1465; cf. 1492; cf. Determinatio theol. Par.: CR I, 380.

<sup>15</sup> DS 1661.

any false trust in one's own merit. The Council of Trent opposes the dangers of the *sola fide* doctrine, which involves examining both Luther's exaggerated formulation (with its effects on the ordinary people, which Luther had not intended) and also the Council of Trent's abridged version of the *sola fide* doctrine.<sup>16</sup> A convergence on the matter exists because, according to the Catholic tradition, reception of the sacrament of the Eucharist is not the reward for preparing oneself worthily.<sup>17</sup> And on the other hand Luther and the Lutheran confessional writings — in the wake of the further development of the Reformation — perceived the danger of cheap grace and began again to stress the need to discriminate against sin (which they had neglected to do at the beginning).<sup>18</sup> Thus the Smalcald Articles when defining the reasons for dissociating themselves from the Enthusiasts, stress the difference between the original sin which remains after baptism and "open sins".

"Some fanatics may appear . . . who hold that once they have received the Spirit or the forgiveness of sins, or once they have become believers, they will persevere in faith even if they sin afterwards, and such sin will not harm them. They cry out 'Do what you will, it matters not as long as you believe, for faith blots out all sins', etc. They add that if anyone sins after he has received faith and the Spirit, he never really had the Spirit and faith . . . It is therefore necessary to know and to teach that when holy people, aside from the fact that they still possess and feel original sin and daily repent and strive against it, fall into open sin (as David fell into adultery, murder and blasphemy), faith and the Spirit have departed from them."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> On the concept of the Lutheran doctrine of *sola fide* at the Council of Trent cf. the list of errors in A. de Vega, Catharinus, D. de Soto, A. Delphinus: cf. V. Pfnür, "Zur Verurteilung der reformatorischen Rechtfertigungslehre auf dem Konzil von Trient", *Annuario historiae conciliorum* 8, 1976, 407-428.

<sup>17</sup> See above note 6; cf. Pius X, "... nec, ut sumentibus id quasi merces aut praemium sit suarum virtutum": DS 3375.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Melanchthon, Loci 1521: MSA II 17, 21-27 with 139f.; 412ff.; Ap IV, 144; BSLK, 188, 33ff., "Therefore, such a faith does not remain in those who obey their lusts, nor does it exist together with mortal sin" (The Book of Concord 127). On the concept of "mortal sin" in Luther and Melanchthon cf. V. Pfnür, *Einig in der Rechtfertigungslehre?* Wiesbaden 1970, 182-193.

<sup>19</sup> SA III, III, 42-43, BSLK 448, 4-24; The Book of Concord 309f.; cf. CA XII, 7: "Rejected here are those who teach that persons who have once become godly cannot fall again", BSLK 67, 12ff.; The Book of Concord 35; LC IV Baptism, 82, "But it does happen that we slip and fall out of the ship. If anybody does fall out, he should immediately head for the ship and cling to it until he can climb aboard again and sail on in it as he had done before", BSLK 707, 5-10; The Book of Concord 446; WA 30 II, 670, 25; WA 40 I, 322; WA 32, 524, 5ff.; WA 39 I, 101, 22; WA 45, 146, 34-147, 33; WA 50, 599, 5-600, 2.

On the basis of this distinction, the Smalcald Articles like most of the Lutheran church orders, teach the following: "However, the lesser (that is, the truly Christian) excommunication excludes those who are manifest and impenitent sinners from the sacrament and other fellowship of the church until they mend their ways and avoid sin"<sup>20</sup>.

According to Art XXVIII of the Apology, a bishop also has power of jurisdiction "namely, the authority to excommunicate those who are guilty of public offenses or to absolve them if they are converted and ask for absolution"<sup>21</sup>.

Thus when one examines the Catholic and Lutheran doctrinal tradition one perceives a common basic conviction. On the one hand we are never so worthy as to deserve the grace of the Eucharist through our own merit. On the other hand certain basic prerequisites are essential in order to ensure that it is the Lord's Supper which is celebrated, and not a mere communal meal; that the church does not make itself "guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11: 27); and that "the Word of

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<sup>20</sup> SA III, IX; BSLK 457, 1ff.; The Book of Concord 314; cf. Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors (1528): "First, the pastor needs to instruct the people how great a sin is to dishonor the sacrament and to misuse it. For Paul says in 1 Cor. 11: 27f. 'You are guilty of profaning the body and blood of Christ' . . . Nor shall such be admitted to the sacrament as are caught in the web of open sin, adultery, gluttony, and the like, and show no contrition", Am 40, 292; cf. 311. Braunschweiger Kirchenordnung (1528): Vam banne: Sehling VI/1, 384 = Hamburger Kirchenordnung (1529): Sehling V, 509; Brandenburg — Nürnberg, Kinderpredigten (1533): Sehling XI, 274; Hannover, Kirchenordnung (1536): "Those who are living in shameful sins, which cause all kinds of annoyance, shall in accordance with Christian order be fraternally punished and admonished to mend their ways; and when such punishment has no effect on them, the clergy shall not admit them to God's Table, although they shall not be excluded from hearing the sermon" (Sehling VI/2, 1008); Luther, Sermons of the Year 1523: "The Sacrament shall not be distributed among the people en masse, as the pope has done. When I preach the Gospel I do not know who is touched by it. But I think that it has touched those who come to the Sacrament. . . . Consequently one can trace and see whether those who take the Sacrament show signs of bearing the fruits which spring from it, and of showing love. If they do not do so, they can be excluded from the congregation", WA 12, 485, 491; cf. also E. W. Zeeden, *Katholische Überlieferungen in den lutherischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Münster 1959, 61ff.

<sup>21</sup> Ap XXVIII, 13, BSLK 400, 18ff.; The Book of Concord 283; cf. CA XXV, 1: "The custom has been retained among us of not administering the sacrament to those who have not previously been examined and absolved", BSLK 97, 34ff.; The Book of Concord 61.



God, and God Himself, are not despised and defamed even among unbelievers”<sup>22</sup>.

Within the framework of this basic conviction there have been, and there will be, different accents in the style of piety.

Vinzenz Pfnür

<sup>22</sup> Sehling XI, 274.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Accra	<i>One Baptism, One Eucharist and a Mutually Recognized Ministry, The Eucharist</i>
Ap	Apology to the Augsburg Confession
C	Congregation
CA	Augsburg Confession
BSLK	The Confessional Writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church
CR	Corpus Reformationum
Dombes I	The Group of Les Dombes, Towards a Common Eucharistic Faith
Dombes II	The Group of Les Dombes, The Meaning of the Eucharist
DS	H. Denzinger, A. Schönmetzer, <i>Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum</i>
Gt	German text
Lt	Latin text
Louvain	Louvain meeting of the Commission on Faith and Order, Intercommunion or Community? and The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought
Malta	The Malta Report of the international Lutheran/Roman Catholic Study Commission "The Gospel and the Church"
MSA	Melanchthon's Works
P	Priest/Pastor
USA III	Report of the official Lutheran/Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA, "The Eucharist as Sacrifice", <i>Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue</i>

- USA IV      Report of the official Lutheran/Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA, "Eucharist and Ministry", *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue*
- WA          Luther's Works
- Windsor      Windsor Statement of the international Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission on Eucharist Doctrine
- Sch          F. W. Schirrmacher, Briefe und Akten zu der Geschichte des Religionsgesprächs zu Marburg 1529 und des Reichstags zu Augsburg (Gotha 1876)



